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Rhythm

Every Drummer Needs It

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The Knack
'My Sharona'

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FACE TO FACE

SIMON PHILLIPS & KAZ RODRIGUEZ

On why it's all about the sound...

ANDY GANGADEEN

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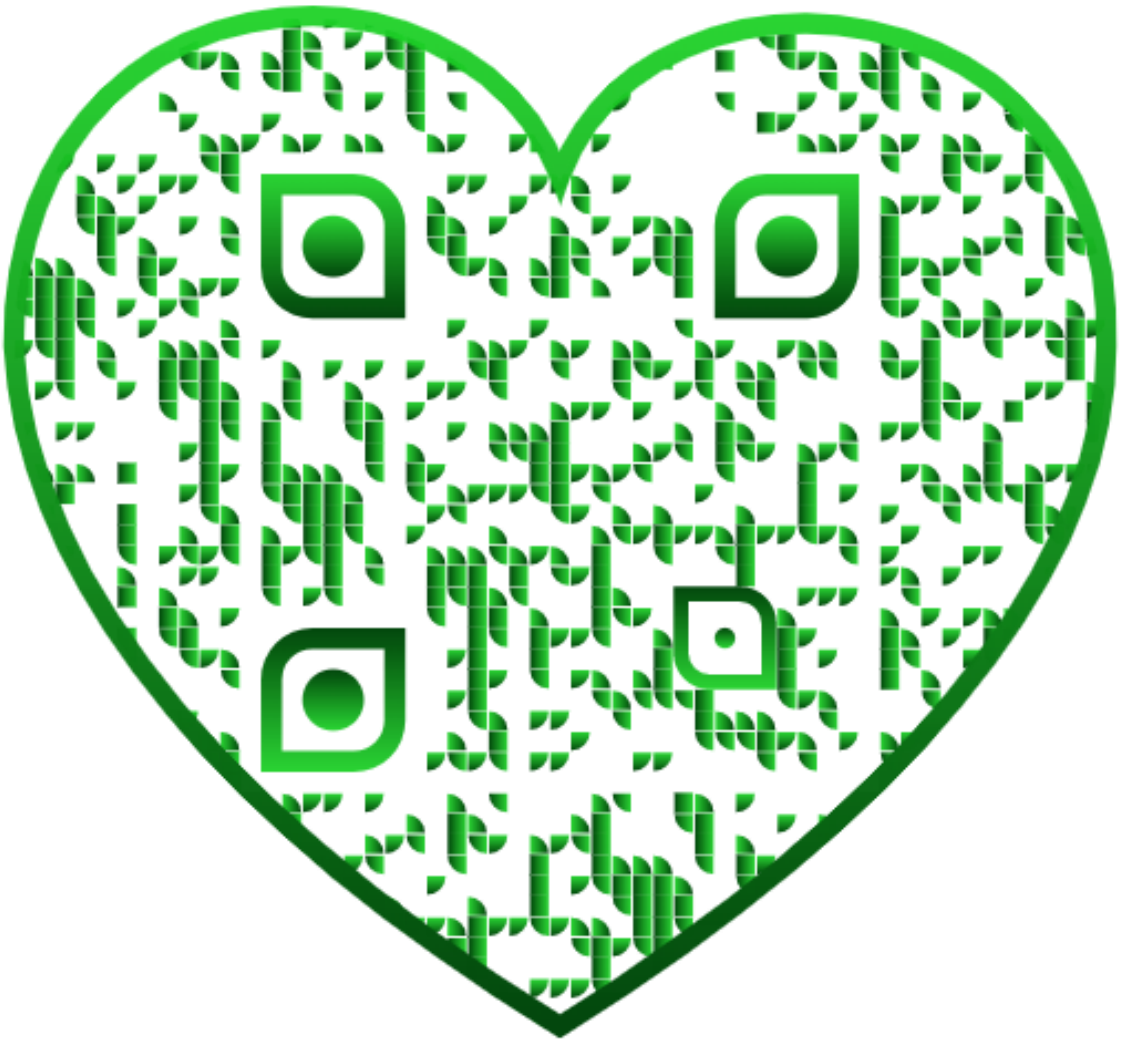

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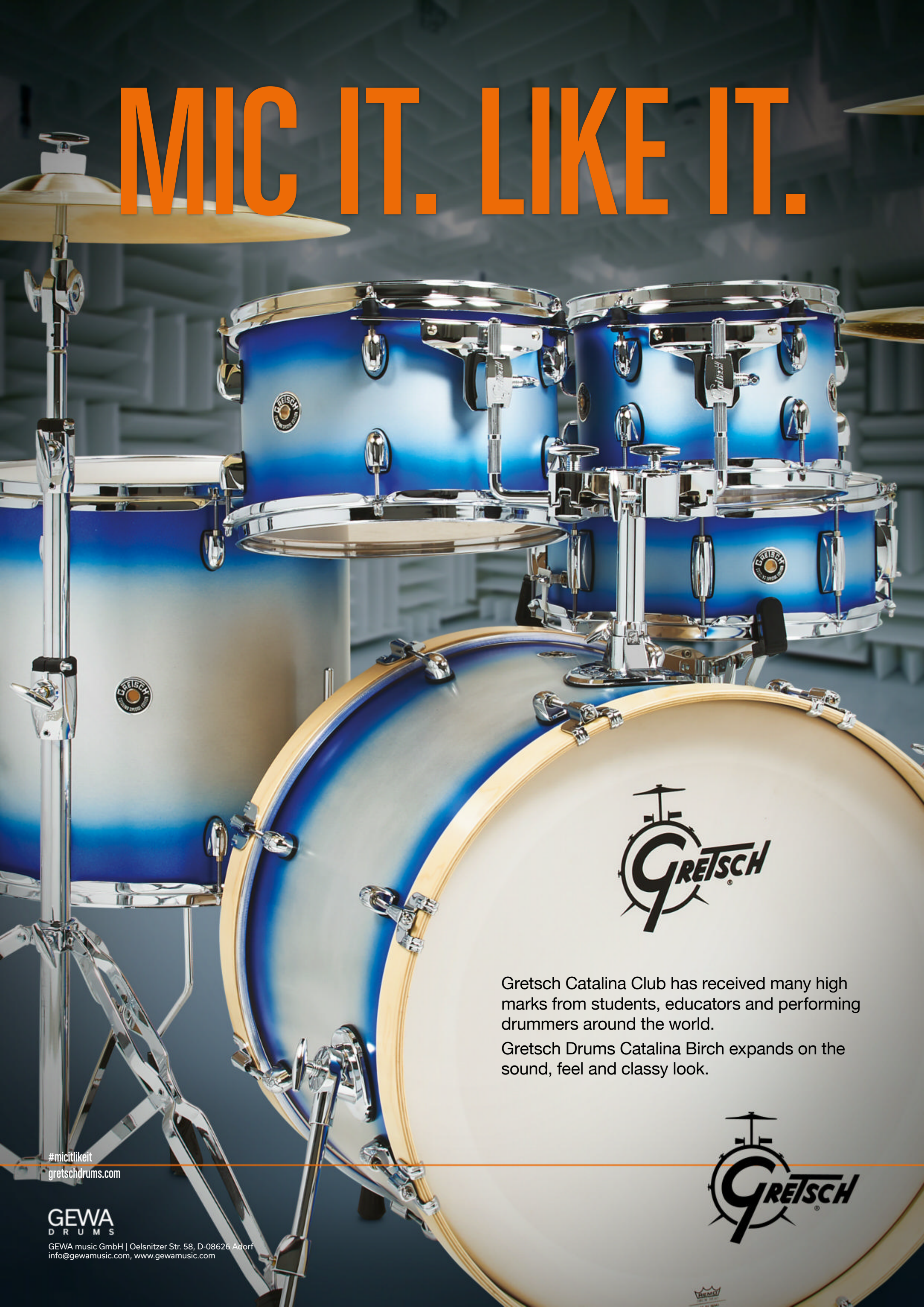

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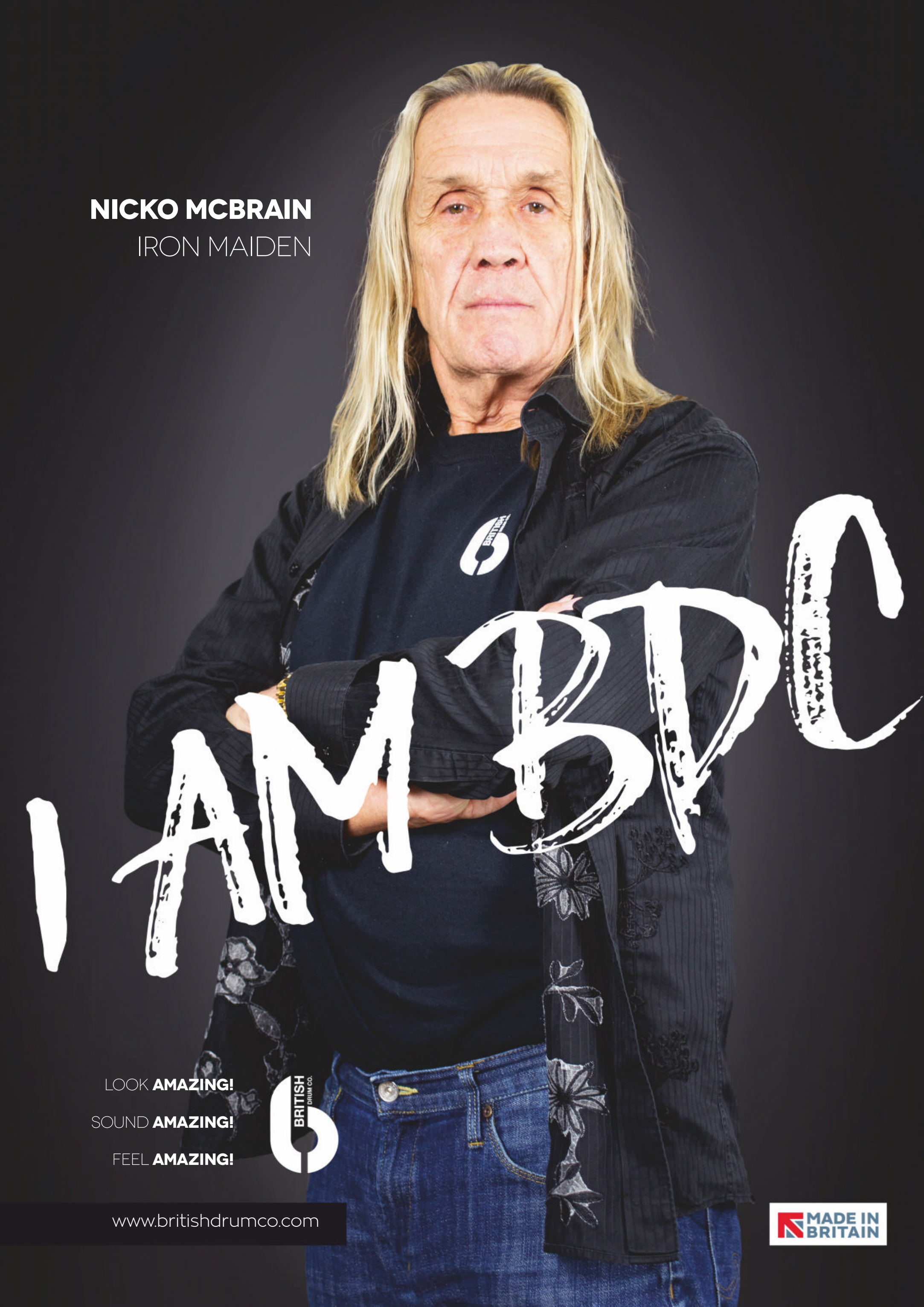

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HELLO! I HOPE THAT THIS FINDS YOU ALL WELL...

To kick off this issue, I'd like to extend a very warm welcome back to our cover stars, Simon Phillips and Kaz Rodriguez. In this, the first of a very special new series of Face-To-Face interviews, we invited Kaz to quiz Simon – one of his biggest drumming heroes – when Simon visited the UK for his band Protocol's 30th anniversary shows at the end of 2019. The results are a fascinating insight into how Simon found his path – not only a world-class player, but as a leading producer, engineer and composer – his fascination with sound and recording, and how his words of wisdom at a drum clinic inspired a certain young drummer to follow his dreams...

Now, everyone loves a surprise, don't they? Especially when they come in the form of a three-drummer hybrid set-up of epic proportions, courtesy of Andy Gangadeen, his famous Gangascope and the new line-up of The Bays... You can find out exactly what I'm talking about on page 50 and hear from all three members of the team – Andy, Oli Wiseman and Kaz Rodriguez – on their exciting new adventure.

Also in this issue, Pete Riley and the Beats Working team are on hand to help you improve your drumming skills with targeted lessons and play-alongs to suit every level. Mike Sturgis offers advice on developing a portfolio career away from the drum throne, and Jim Keltner shares his memories of 'Disc Jockey Jump' on *Tracks That Inspired A Generation*.

After our recent trip to the NAMM show, new gear is arriving thick and fast at our review studio and, if you haven't already, be sure to check out Rhythm's comprehensive video coverage from the show floor at our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine), for a sneak peek at what's going to be heading your way in the months to come.

As always, we'd love to hear what you think of the issue and look forward to seeing you next time...

Louise King

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Contributing to this issue...

David West

"I still remember my first assignment for Rhythm some 16 years ago, heading out to interview Andy Strachan from The Living End armed with a handheld tape recorder and a notepad. Too many interviews to count later, I've met my heroes, like Steve Gadd and Zigaboo Modeliste, and even faced the withering gaze of Ginger Baker and lived to tell the tale. I'm thrilled that Rhythm is back in action!"

Best piece of drumming advice

"In an interview Thomas Lang told me, 'Never play when you practise, never practise when you play.' I realised I'd been playing, not practising, for years. Simply expressed, but revelatory."

Rich Chamberlain

Raised on his dad's AC/DC records, Rich has been channelling his inner Phil Rudd since he was a nipper, with varying degrees of success. And while today there's little danger of him laying down thundering grooves at a packed stadium any time soon, since first joining the Rhythm team 10 years ago Rich has been able to put the questions to rock royalty such as the aforementioned Mr Rudd. Hey, someone's gotta do it...

Best piece of drumming advice

"The best piece of advice I've been given is also advice I wish I'd heeded sooner – always protect your hearing! Drumming doesn't have to equal tinnitus, so look after your ears."

James Cumpsty

First starting on Rhythm back in 1989, photographer and video producer James has worked under eight editors of the mag. In fact, he can boast of having his pictures in every issue for one continuous run of 20 years! In that time he's got to watch Paul McCartney rehearse (as Linda cooked lunch), meet his photographic hero Terry O'Neill while shooting Charlie Watts, been on stage with the Chili Peppers in Paris, and made some lifelong friends on the way. "I am immensely proud to be shooting for Rhythm again," he says, describing himself as an "absolute drumming beginner (still)".

Best piece of drumming advice

"It's what you leave out that counts..."

Issue 295

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Image: Jorgen Angel/Getty

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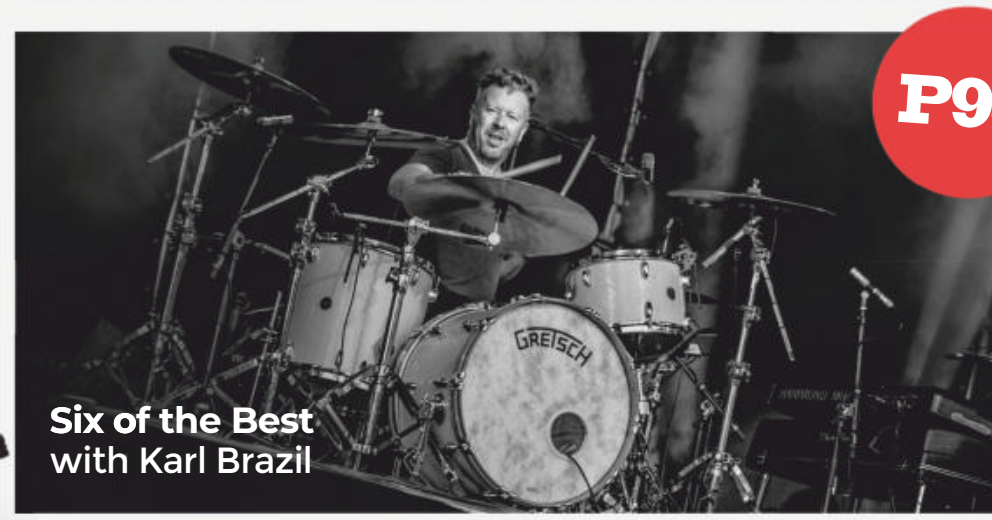

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NEIL PEART RIP

Drum icon passes aged 67

Just days into 2020 the drum world lost one of its brightest stars when Neil Peart passed away, following a battle with brain cancer. Peart, who had been quietly fighting the disease for three-and-a-half years, was 67 years old.

Born on 12 September 1952 in Ontario, Canada, Peart picked up the sticks at the age of 13 and five years later travelled to the UK in search of a career behind the kit. Within 18 months he had moved back to Canada, his dream of a life as a professional drummer seemingly dented – until the summer of 1974 when he joined up with Alex Lifeson and Geddy Lee, replacing John Rutsey in Rush.

To say the rest is history would admittedly be a cliché, but the prog trio were to make plenty of history together over the coming 41 years until Peart's retirement in 2015. It wasn't just Peart's incredible technique and masterful command of the kit that set him apart, he was also the band's main lyricist, often tackling themes such as sci-fi and fantasy. His wisdom both at and away from the kit would earn him the hugely appropriate nickname, The Professor.

While news of his passing sent a stunned silence across the drumming community, it wasn't long until social media was awash with tributes from friends, fans and those who appreciated the work of a genuine drum icon.

Mike Portnoy was one drummer who held Peart in the absolute highest esteem, and he took to his social media accounts to say: "It absolutely breaks my heart to pieces to get the news of the passing of one of my greatest heroes of all time. Neil Peart will always be a mentor and a hero to me and his influence on me as a drummer for the past 40 years is absolutely impossible to measure."

Other tributes came, from fellow prog icon Carl Palmer, who said: "He helped move the boundaries in progressive rock music." Metallica's Lars Ulrich wrote on Instagram, "Thank you Neil... Thank you for what you did for drummers all over the world with your passion, your approach, your principles and your unwavering commitment to the instrument!" In a statement, Dave Grohl described Peart as "a kind, thoughtful, brilliant man" and "an inspiration to millions with an unmistakable sound who spawned generations of musicians – like myself – to pick up two sticks and chase a dream."

■ *Neil Peart, 1952-2020. Look out for a full tribute to Peart in a later issue of Rhythm.*

Image: Mat Hayward

OFFBEATS

JB THUMBS UP FOR YAMAHA

Fresh from wrapping their UK tour, IDLES drummer Jon Beavis has lavished praise on his Yamaha Live Custom Hybrid Oak kit. He beamed: "I have been playing these new Yamaha drums whilst touring America and have since used them in the studio. I am incredibly pleased with the results. They sound and project like nothing else and feel so rewarding to play. Amongst the energy of our live shows, I have the confidence that they will deliver."

DOLMAYAN SOAD HINT

John Dolmayan has once again ignited hopes of new material from System of a Down. Reacting to news that John Frusciante has rejoined Red Hot Chili Peppers, Dolmayan posted an image of the logos of the two bands, along with those of Tool and Rage Against The Machine, saying that three of the bands had found a way of working together again and he hoped that his own band could do the same. We have our fingers firmly crossed here at Rhythm.

QUEEN HONOURS QUEEN MAN

Roger Taylor continues to put the royal into rock royalty, with the Queen man scooping an OBE in the Queen's New Year Honour List. Taylor was given the honour for his services to music. Well deserved, we say! Next stop, Arise Sir Roger?

Image: Neil Lupin

SNAPSHOT

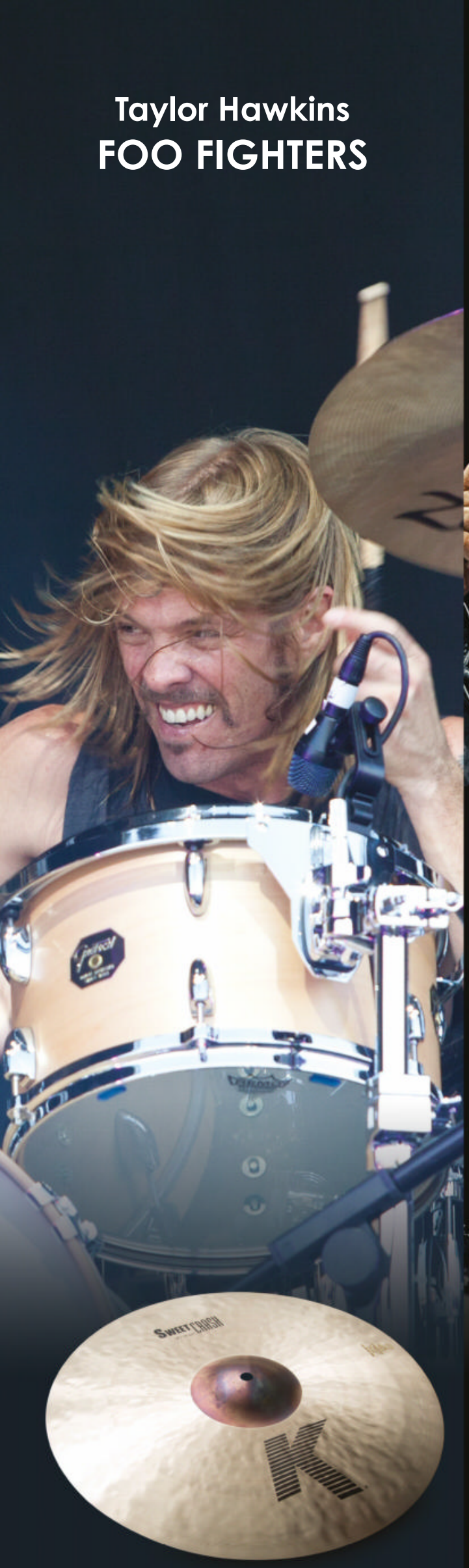
This Moment In History

Phil Collins

"What we do as drummers should serve the song. Of course, if you can get your stuff in there too, that's great. In a band like Genesis I played what was right for the song, but you want to show people what you can do, and Brand X gave me more freedom to do that. Even if it left people baffled and scratching their heads!"

Image: Ian Dickson/Getty

Taylor Hawkins
FOO FIGHTERS



ARTIST CHOICE:
19” K Sweet Crash

Ash Soan
INDEPENDENT

Photo: Francesco Desmaele

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Eddy Thrower
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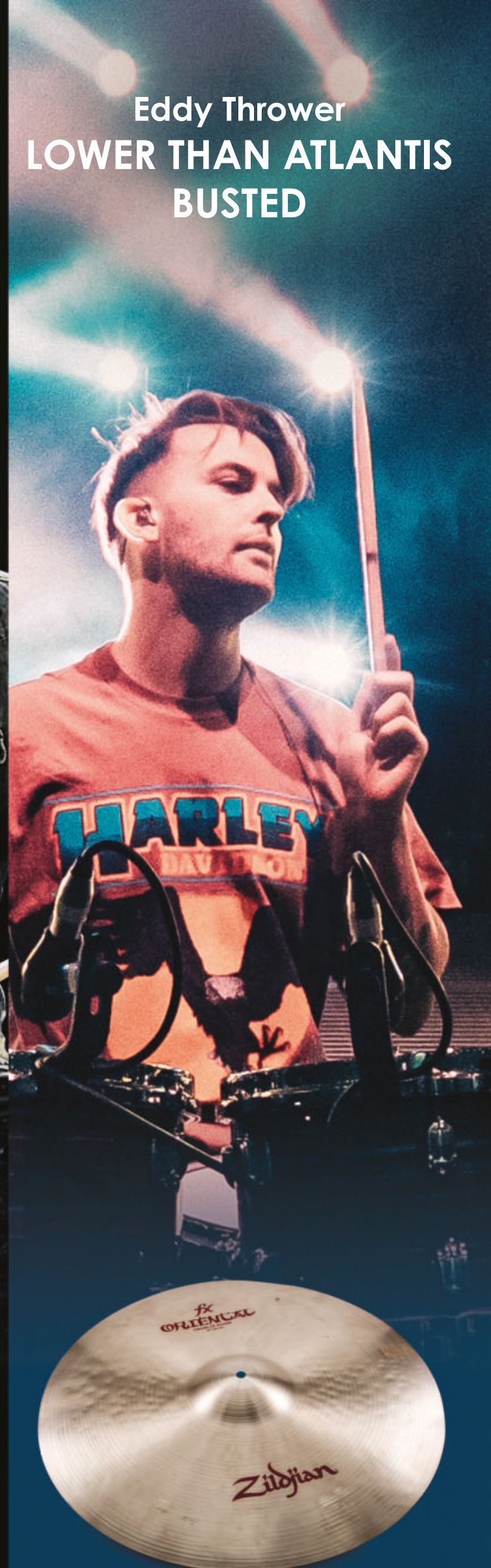

ARTIST CHOICE:
22” Oriental
Crash of Doom

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Jack Bevan
FOALS

ARTIST CHOICE:
24” K Light Ride

Josh Dun
TWENTY ONE PILOTS

Photo: Real Bear Media

ARTIST CHOICE:
19” A Custom
Medium Crash

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Image: Jose Caamano

Introducing

CHRIS WOOLLISON – POLY-MATH

Prog and math rock played with plenty of rhythmic punch

Inspired by a love of The Mars Volta, Yes and King Crimson, Poly-Math was born from Brighton's math rock scene in 2013, evolving to play instrumental progressive rock. "Math rock can often be more like jazz, but we bonded over the heavier side," says drummer Chris Woollison. Poly-Math's latest release, the epic 'Sensors In Everything', is full of odd time signatures and creative grooves.

How does the songwriting work?

"Tim [Walters], the guitarist, will often come with an idea which could be almost purely melodic, and then the rest of us will bring an element to that, we might bring the rhythm to it. Tim's a drummer as well, so he might come up with something polyrhythmic. Generally, we don't jam."

How do you create the drum parts?

"I'll generally follow the guitar. I pick out the melody or the important changes in metre and go from there. I might try and get an idea down that follows the guitar or follows the changes that Tim is doing and then simplify it, take bits out that allow a more solid beat to come through. I try not to overcomplicate things. I'm much more interested in listening to someone pound a quite solid beat home rather than more technical stuff..."

Did you try to record 'Sensors In Everything' in a single take?

"We try to do as little editing as possible, particularly with the drums. We've always been more of a live band. I like the push and pull of not being quite down-the-line, gridded with a metronome, so we'll split it into sections. You can hear where the music winds down and it becomes a big wash of noise, there will be the obvious cut off sections. We'll record the drums to a click, but I don't like it to sound over-edited so hopefully it retains the feel, a few little mistakes here and there that don't detract from the performance. It's nice to hear the reality of someone actually playing."

Do you feel at home playing live?

"Definitely. I love the process of recording, I love the experimentation, but the pay-off is playing live. We'll play with those pushes and pulls, playing different fills, changing it every time. When we record stuff that we do live, it's funny to listen to how it starts off at the beginning of the tour and where it ends up. They're almost completely different and it's evolved without us even really noticing. We've introduced an element live where I'm using my [Roland] SPD-S pad to trigger our lights... The venues we play are not huge. Lighting is often an afterthought, so it's nice to have something that moves with the music." **David West**

Key kit: Yamaha Oak Custom kit, WorldMax Black Brass Snare, Meinl, Sabian & Istanbul Agop cymbals, Pro-Mark sticks, and Remo heads.

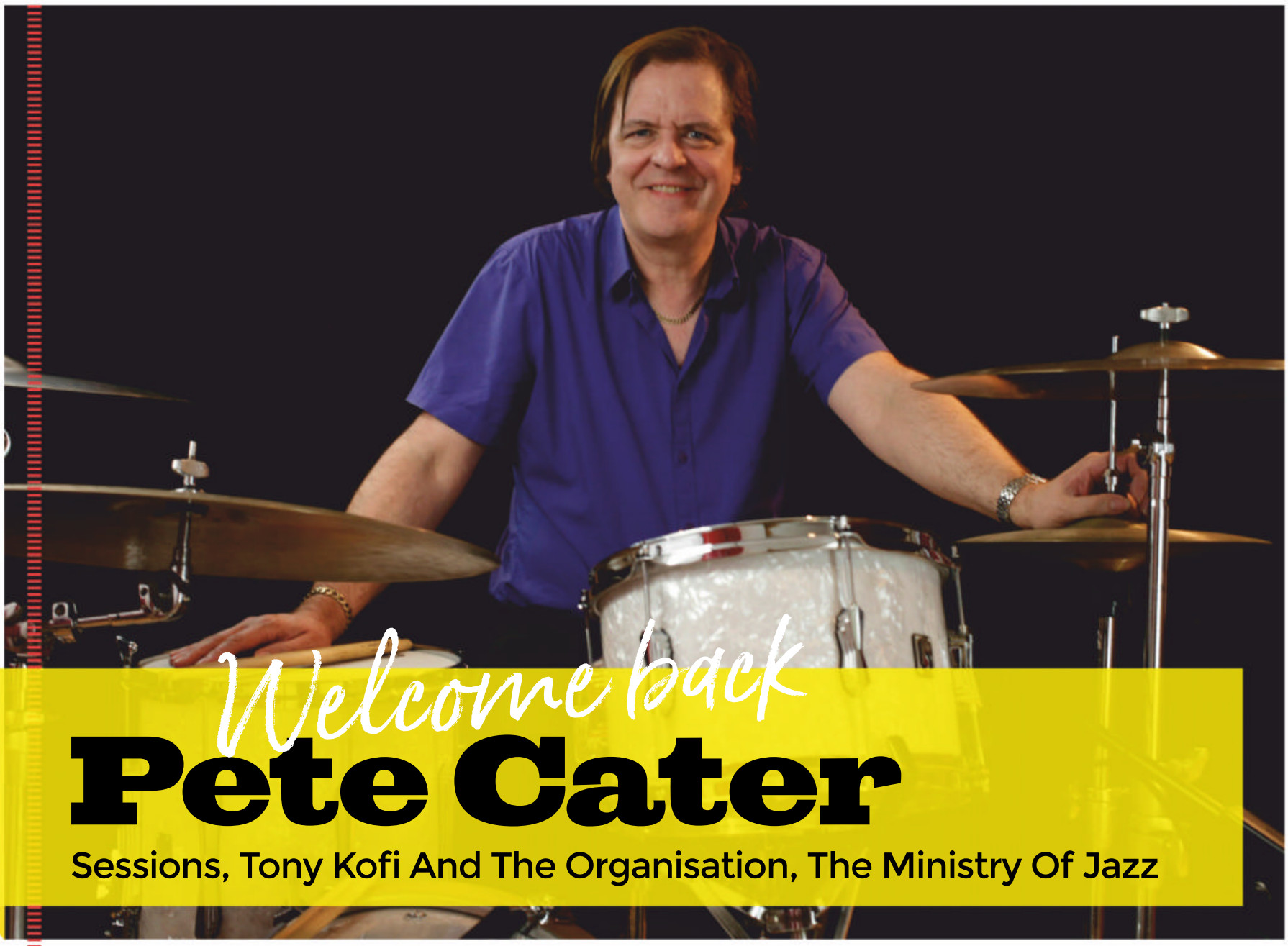

Image: James Cumpsty

Welcome back Pete Cater

Sessions, Tony Kofi And The Organisation, The Ministry Of Jazz

Jazz star aims to unlock creative practice

Your new book is subtitled *Stickings, Dexterity & Orchestration*. What's the concept there?

"It's very much a departure from traditional pattern-based learning and doing repetitive things in unchanging subdivisions, the way rudiments tend to be studied, which is all perfectly fine but I thought it was time to present a different way at it. It's built upon the premise that all sticking patterns are made up of just 12 very small components and everything that we play is composites of those. This is the whole concept of dexterity that I've come up with where you take different types of stickings and play them over changing rhythm patterns. It makes your hands work in a completely different way. The other key element is orchestration, how we can think about our drum set as a single entity and the different tonal combinations that we have available to us. It's an organised system rather than randomly improvising orchestrations."

How will this apply to people's playing?

"I'm of the point of view that we learn in two different ways. We've got facility-based learning, which is technique, mechanics, and then we've got idiomatically-based learning, which is styles, genres, music on the drums. The tendency, either intentionally or unintentionally, is to separate those two elements and I'm trying to pull the two together so you develop facility, but at the same time, you can immediately apply it creatively. There's loads of stuff to play in the book but, for me, some of the most meaningful content is the actual written text. Anybody who's kind enough to invest in a copy, I do very much recommend that they read all the words. We often don't do that with drum books, we just jump in and start working through the exercises without always having a fully formed understanding of why the author is presenting this stuff to us."

The album you made with Tony Kofi And The Organisation garnered great coverage!

"I'm pleased about that because I wanted to make a statement with that music. For a number of years I've really focused on the big band. 'Hey, there's Pete, he's that drummer that does all those Buddy Rich cover versions,' which is fantastic and extremely fulfilling to do, but I did feel I was getting a little bit typecast. I've heard it being referred to as a victim of your own success, but it has been very satisfying to have a profile boost doing something in a different corner of the jazz park to the driving, swinging big band stuff. It's reflected in my work because people are asking me to do things that, maybe five years ago, they wouldn't have been calling me for, which is terrific. I've been asked about doing some work with a quite well-known prog rock band in 2020 whose name I won't divulge at the moment, but discussions are in place. I think that will come as a real surprise to some people." **David West**

Out Now *Pete Cater On Drums Volume 1, Stickings, Dexterity & Orchestration*

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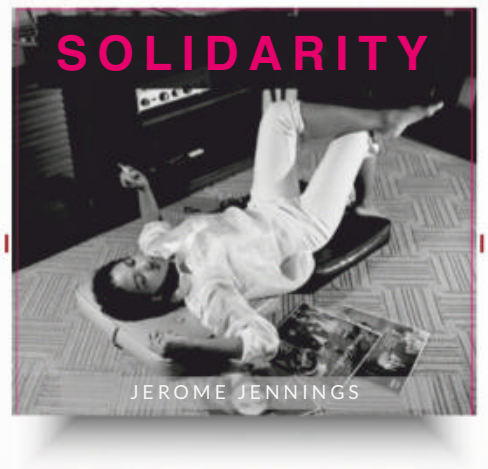

JEROME JENNINGS

The be-bop bandleader with a powerful message behind his music

Inspired to start drumming after watching Sheila E. on *The Arsenio Hall Show*, Jerome Jennings has become one of the leading lights of the new generation of jazz players. He's the resident conductor of The Juilliard Jazz Orchestra, has played with Sonny Rollins, Benny Golson, Ray Charles and Hank Jones, and released two albums as bandleader. 2016's *The Beast* tackles police brutality and his new release *Solidarity* was inspired by the experiences of African-American women and the LGBTQI community.

With *The Beast* and *Solidarity*, you're following the tradition of jazz albums with a message like *Free For All* and *We Insist!*

"Absolutely. It comes from my want for change in the society that I live in. There's a lot going on in America. We have to fix this police state and this way of policing that happens in the United States. It's too aggressive. Policing here has gotten out of control. It's been out of control for a long time. This needs to be fixed through legislation and I wanted to address these things through the music. I can't ignore it."

Did *Solidarity* take long to finish?

"It took some time. I could have put a record out probably a year after *The Beast* which was released in November 2016, but the direction of the second album was altered drastically once I got hold of some publications and essays. I met a woman named Danielle McGuire, she wrote a book called *At The Dark End Of The Street* and after reading this book and learning about Recy Taylor, I had to write something in dedication to her. The direction slowly began to change. The only tune that was scheduled originally to be on my second recording was 'Be-Bop'."

Playing with a powerful bassist like Christian McBride, who's on *Solidarity*, is there a push and pull?

"Wow, that's a great question, man. You want it to groove at all times. Depending on the situation, when your bandleader is a bass player, you have to make sure you're accommodating him or her at all times, even when things get loud and really rambunctious, you still have to understand that you're a sideman and this is his band. If he's performing with me, this is what makes Christian so good, he knows how to fall back, where he can push and pull me, but he understands that I am the bandleader. It's kind of shocking, this person I listened to growing up is now taking instructions from me. Christian is one of those rare bass players who has the ability to push you at fast tempos. He's like a train and if you're not jumping on, you're going to get run over. The groove and making good music is the number one priority at all times. It's something I'm constantly developing and trying to get to the next level of what that means."

What did you take from playing with Sonny Rollins?

"Sonny said to me, 'Jerome, I've played with Max Roach, I've played with Philly Joe Jones, I've played with Elvin. I want to play with Jerome Jennings now.' Just find your own identity and your own sound. It's okay if people like it. If people are indifferent to your sound and style, it's okay, but your musical style and identity should be just as personal to you as your nose or your voice, the way you walk. You have to be okay when sometimes people might not dig it, especially when we're in those moments where we're searching for something. We're constantly searching and that's something I learned from Sonny." **David West**

Key kit: *Craviotto drums, Zildjian cymbals, Vic Firth sticks.*

"SONNY SAID TO ME, 'JEROME, I'VE PLAYED WITH MAX ROACH, I'VE PLAYED WITH PHILLY JOE JONES, I'VE PLAYED WITH ELVIN. **I WANT TO PLAY WITH JEROME JENNINGS NOW.**"

Image: John Abbott

Image: James Cumpsty

COMPARING YOURSELF TO OTHERS

How to be the drummer you want to be with **Emily Dolan Davies**

We've all been there. You watch a gig or a video, or just read about what another drummer is up to and automatically start comparing yourself.

I suffered from this reaction for years and would proceed to start making a mental list of the skills and experience another drummer had which I didn't, and by default this meant I was rubbish and not worthy. I would be left feeling hopeless, deflated and unmotivated.

These days I've managed to interrupt this automatic pattern of thinking by catching myself and asking two questions: what kind of player am I and what kind of player do I want to be?

Just asking these questions seems to take all the negative energy out of the situation, and bonus, it gives me some valuable answers!

Most of the time I realise these are just feelings of insecurity which have *nothing* to do with the kind of player or person I want to be or the person I've compared myself to. I notice it, try to laugh at myself for getting wrapped up in it, and re-centre myself

with what is important to me and my journey.

Alternatively, if a nerve has been hit that makes me realise there's a mismatch between who I am as a player and who I want to be, then I get out the party streamers and start celebrating right away! I can now make a plan of exactly what to work on to feel stronger and get closer to being the musician I aspire to be. To me, it's nothing but a win.

As a side note, I think it's useful to recognise that most of what you're seeing from anyone, especially online with their social media profile, is most likely to be the 'highlight reel' of their life. You will probably never see all the struggles that went on to get to that point, but I can almost guarantee at some time along their path, they faced challenges that weren't too dissimilar from yours right now.

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Jim Keltner

‘Disc Jockey Jump’

Gene Krupa And His Orchestra (1948)

Drummer: Gene Krupa

“This tune hooked me from the moment I heard it – it was killer then, and it’s killer now. I was around 12 when my dad started playing it at home and it immediately grabbed my attention in a way that nothing else had before. It’s funny, because the drum sound on it is modern, even though it was recorded way back in the ’40s. Everything about it still captivates me today, though - it’s just so cool. It’s the sound, that groove, the short little solo that Gene plays, and the way he goes in and out of it and puts it together – it makes real good sense for the song. I had only just got my first set of drums when I heard this track and I never thought that I’d be able to play like that.

“As musicians, we are shaped by so many different things coming up and who I am musically is probably a combination of ‘Disc Jockey Jump’, and one other tune my dad would play that really caught my ear around that time – Louis Jordan’s ‘Saturday Night Fish Fry’. They both had a big impact on me. Even though I had a lot of trauma in my early childhood, I was lucky enough to be surrounded by music and love; it’s what’s made me tick all these years and helped me learn to rise above things. My mama – a beautiful Mexican lady – enjoyed country music, while my dad was more into jazz, Benny Goodman and R’n’B. It’s that music that I remember the most, and after hearing Krupa on ‘Disc Jockey Jump’, I heard him again with Benny Goodman. That early exposure to such a broad range of music really helped me appreciate the soul in it – not just the licks and riffs, and the things that you get wrapped up in as a player as you advance on. The reassurance that I’ve got from music has been crucial, as is the way that I have been loved during my life – that could be the biggest part of who I am, and I wish everyone was that fortunate.

“Unlike many drummers, I went straight into the studio, rather than into a band and that touring cycle. So, what I know about is playing on records and, because I wanted to do something different every time, I have never felt comfortable with the idea of having my own voice. My parents and their music were such a huge influence on me coming up, and all of that is tattooed into my DNA – I feel it reflected in everything that I do, and how I do it...”

Image: Scott Dudelson/Getty

Starclassic

WALNUT/BIRCH

REIMAGINING A NEW SONIC INSPIRATION

The evolution of Starclassic from maple, birch, bubinga, birch/bubinga continues, and now - after intense analysis, rigorous research, development and product testing - we have arrived at the latest Starclassic modern development, Starclassic Walnut/Birch.

We discovered the perfect ratio of walnut to birch that produced a superior quality of low-to-mid frequency warmth that perfectly complemented the clear attack and higher frequency projection of birch. The sound is familiar, but distinctively different from Tama sounds of the past.

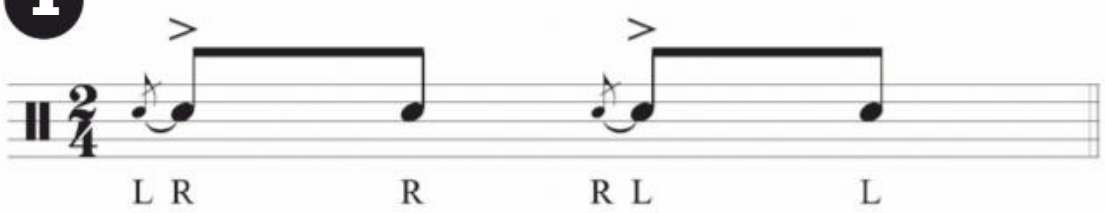
The Starclassic series continues to be a representation of our collective drum-making passion, wisdom and pursuit to offer refined and differentiated sounds. Starclassic Walnut/Birch defines our commitment to evolve our drum sounds and inspire the contemporary drummer.

TAMA®

TamaGBI YouTube TamaUK @tamauk @TAMAUK

Rudiment Of The Month

The Flam Tap

1

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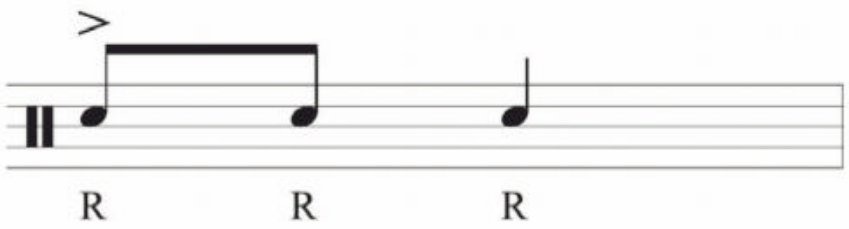
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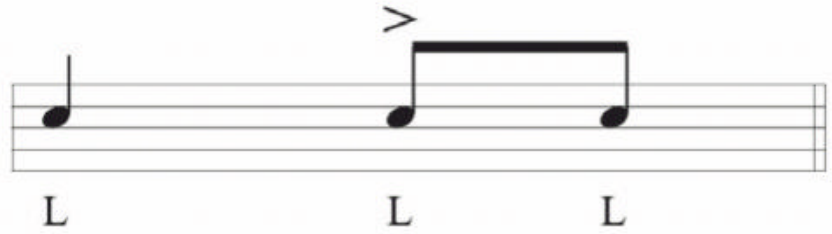
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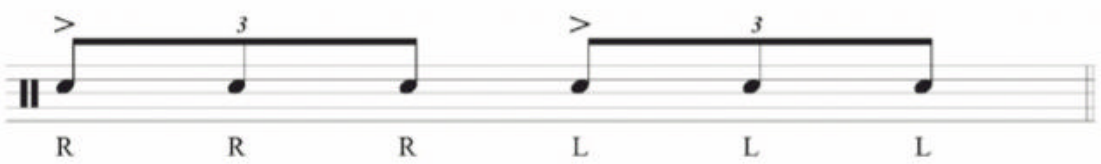

Like so many rudiments the flam tap is onomatopoeic in so much as it's essentially a flam followed by a tap, or unaccented note. The crucial element, however, is the fact that it switches hands. So if the first time it's played as a right-hand flam (where the left hand will play the ghosted note), followed by a quiet right, the next will be a left-hand flam followed by a left. With this sound in mind, you could be forgiven for assuming that it essentially consists of two notes per hand however we have to remember the third note, which is the grace note for the next flam.

When played with some attention given to the motions involved it should result in each hand playing three notes consisting of one accented note followed by two quieter notes. And this motion, with a little work focused on harnessing the energy of the accented note to play the two quieter notes, should result in creating three notes with a single motion.

The final step in generating some speed with relatively little effort is the overlapping of these two three-note motions which should feel as though you're mostly playing the accented element of the flams and getting the other notes 'for free'!

OFFBEATS

DAVE LOVES DIRK

Dirk Verbeuren's work on the forthcoming album from Megadeth has gained 'Deth main man Dave Mustaine's approval. Verbeuren replaced Chris Adler at the kit for the thrash titans back in 2016. In a social media post, Mustaine described Verbeuren's playing on the as-yet-untitled release as "exceptional". Nice work, Dirk!

Image: PYMCA/Getty

MARTIN GRIFFIN RIP

Rhythm is saddened to report the passing of former Hawkwind drummer Martin Griffin. Griffin, who had spells behind the kit with the band in the '70s and '80s, passed away after a short illness.

PORTNOY TALKS PETRUCCI

Mike Portnoy has commented that he would love to work with former Dream Theater bandmate John Petrucci again. Speaking to My Global Mind, Portnoy described the pair's relationship as "very special", adding: "He and I have a great personal relationship now and get together with our families. It would be a shame not to make music in some capacity in the future. I hope we can."

Designed to Control

More length, more versatility, more you.

From a light touch to a massive sound, no stick puts you in control the way *Freestyle* does. Unique specs more than double the size of the 'sweet spot', giving you the freedom to move around and choose the balance point that's right for the music. Play your way with Freestyle.

Tapers: Long **Length:** 17"
Diameters: 7A, 85A, 5A, 55A, 5B

Designed to more than double the 'sweet spot'

VIC FIRTH

© 2018 Vic Firth

FIRST LOOK

ROLAND V-DRUMS ACOUSTIC DESIGN KITS

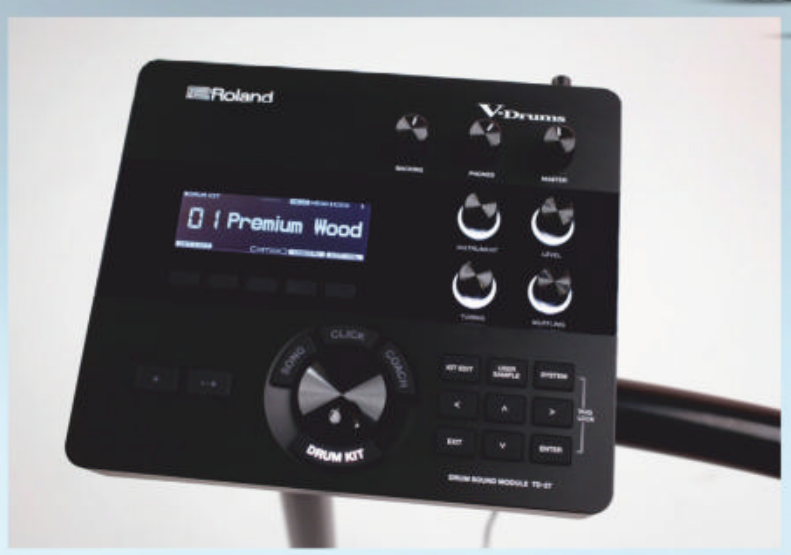
After many years as market leaders in the world of electronic drums with the classic V-Drums line, at the NAMM Show in January, Roland broke the news of its brand new V-Drums Acoustic Design collection. The VAD range sees the company's proprietary triggering technology incorporated into real, full-size drum shells. The internally triggered drums are powered by the new TD-27 sound module – mixing the user-friendly interface of the TD-25 with the digital processing power of the flagship TD-50 – which is also capable of running Roland's digital snare and ride pads, connected via USB.

The VAD506 configuration (pictured) comprises a 20"x16" bass drum and 10"x7", 12"x8" and 14"x13" toms. The poplar shells are finished with a black sparkle wrap and feature a new lug design. The cymbal pads have also been redesigned and are now thinner and lighter, offering more expression and natural swing. The new cymbals are available in 14" and 16" models, both of which are supplied with the 506 configuration. The smaller VAD503 setup is fundamentally the same kit but minus the 12" tom and 16" crash. The 18" digital ride and 14"x5" digital snare drum are supplied with both the 3-piece and 5-piece kits.

In a further effort to replicate the aesthetics of an acoustic kit, Roland has developed its very own cymbal stands and tom mounts to complement the VAD – there's not a rack in sight here.

The third and final configuration (VAD306) uses a different type of shell design which results in much smaller and shallower pads. The bass drum is 18"x9½" while both rack toms are 10" and the snare & floor tom are each 12". This much more modest setup incorporates the TD-17 module rather than the new TD-27, making it a more affordable option. Watch out for full reviews of all V-Drums Acoustic Design kits in forthcoming issues of Rhythm.

PRICE: £4,047
www.roland.com


Roland
V-Drums
01 Premium Wood
CLICK
SONG
DRUM KIT

Roland

FIRST LOOK

SHINY NEW DRUM STUFF TO LUST AFTER

1. Zildjian I Series
Price: From £55
Replacing the discontinued ZBT series, the I family gives entry-level B8 cymbals a contemporary twist by featuring modern weights and profiles. Available in a multitude of cymbal packs, the range boasts a number of FX cymbals including 14" and 17" trash crashes.
www.zildjian.com

2. Roland TD-27KV
Price: £2,639
The TD-27 is the brand new module accompanying Roland's VAD kits (see previous page). The '27KV uses a more familiar rack system with mesh pads and a small bass drum tower, although these are now combined with the flagship digital snare and ride pads.
www.roland.com

3. PDP 20th Anniversary Kit
Price: TBC
Celebrating 20 years of drum building, DW's sister company has released a special anniversary kit and matching snare. It comprises 10"x8", 12"x9", 16"x14" and 22"x18" (7-ply), plus a 14"x6½" snare (10-ply).
www.pacificdrums.com

4. Gretsch Black Copper Snare
Price: TBC
A black powder coating gives these copper drums their unique appearance. Constructed from a 1mm copper shell the 14"x5" or 14"x6½" drums feature a 45-degrees bearing edge, lightning throw off, 42 strand wires, die-cast hoops and snap-in key holder.
www.gretschdrums.com

5. DW Jim Keltner Snare
Price: TBC
The latest addition to the DW Collector's Series ICON range is in honour of the legendary Jim Keltner. This colourful 14"x6½" snare is crafted from 11 plies of hard rock maple and finished with a veneer of laser-cut inlays inspired by Jim's custom decorated kit.
www.dwdrums.com

6. LP Matador Whiskey Barrel Percussion
Price: TBC
Despite the name, these congas and matching bongos are actually constructed from 3-ply New Zealand pine shells. Made to match the exclusive cajon of the same name, each drum features Black Sand Hardware.
www.lpmusic.com

7. Tama Club-JAM Flyer
Price: £329
This tiny kit features a 14"x10" bass drum, 8"x6" rack tom, 10"x9" floor tom and 10"x5" snare. Available in just one wrap finish (Candy Apple Mist), this affordable and portable kit could be the busker's dream.
www.tama.com

3

4

5

6

7

Vintage
CIRCA 1972

ROYAL STAR KIT

Early Japanese kits are increasingly desirable and collectable, as illustrated by this well-preserved Star set, a precursor to today's Tama

Writer: **Geoff Nicholls** | Images: **James Cumpsty**

This month's owner, Welsh drummer Del Harries, admits to being "obsessed with vintage drums" since attending one of the first UK vintage drum fairs in 2000, "organised by the legendary 'Sir' Alan Buckley, and advertised in Rhythm".

Del tells us that he played drums "with a few bands way back (my first drums at school were a mix of old Premier and Beverley) and in a Lottery-funded music project, bringing percussion workshops to people with disabilities".

Today, work commitments restrict his playing opportunities and he admits that, "In truth, it's finding and restoring old drums that I love best. Locating a battered old set and turning it into something playable and lovely, with the fun of some wheeling and dealing thrown in. Inevitable when your nickname is Del Boy!"

So we come to what Del describes as his "pride and joy" kit. It's a 1972 Star drum set, with 22"x14" bass, 13"x9" and 16"x16" toms and 14"x5" snare drum. The Star brand existed from roughly the mid-'60s to the mid-'70s. Del explains that "Star changed their name to Tama from 1974. I picked the kit up in Swansea two years ago, along with a batch of Premier hardware, Zyn cymbals *and* a superb Beverley Cosmic 21 snare. All for just 50 quid!

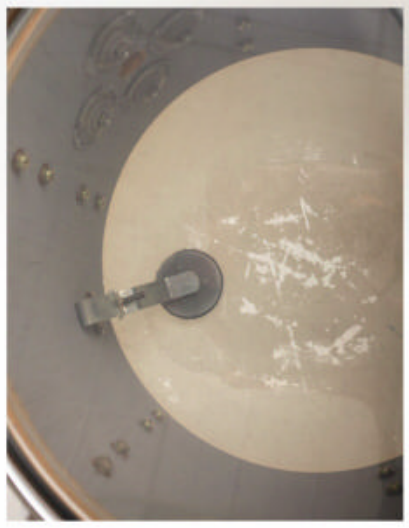
"The mounted and floor toms both have original Star batter heads, the bass drum has vintage 1970s English Headmaster Tone Blaster heads (I believe made by Rose Morris), which came with the kit. I've fitted the front head with a custom-made replacement Star logo sticker. The wrap is a finish called Silky Blue, which by Star standards is quite tame.

"Unlike some of the earlier so-called MIJ (made in Japan) drums which have thin shells, these later Star shells are thick, heavy and painted grey on the inside. I believe they're lauan ply. They're loud, open-sounding drums.

"The bass drum is fitted with a Slingerland Set-O-Matic tom holder. This is something of a mystery as there are no additional holes. It may have been fitted at the factory or just afterwards, instead of Star's own 1970s tom-holder or 1960s consolette rail."

Del has completed the kit with a contemporary Royal Star King Beat snare drum. He says it "has 10 lugs and is extremely heavy with its chrome-over-steel shell, elaborate parallel snare mechanism and 'one-touch tone control'. It has the slightly later round badge which dates it to 1973. Dialling in the snare tension and height adjustment is fiddly compared to simpler vintage snares I'm used to, but once right, it's gunshot loud, clear and crisp."

SILKY BLUE FINISH
The Silky Blue wrap was one of a wide range of finishes, some of which were rather more eye-boggling.



1. PARALLEL BEAUTY
The impressive parallel snare tension mechanism and throw-off are intricately engineered.

2. ROBUST SHELLS
Interior of well-constructed shells are treated with silver sealer and include tone control mufflers.

3. BOW-TIE TENSION
The 'bow-tie' bass drum rod tensioners and chromed steel bass drum hoops are typical of 1970s Japanese drum kits.

SMALL TOM MOUNT
Unusually, the kit has an actual Slingerland Set-O-Matic tom bracket, while the tension lugs are also inspired by Slingerland.

BASS DRUM HOOPS
In common with most oriental drums of the era, the bass drum has hoops of steel rather than wood.

NEED TO KNOW

ROYAL/IMPERIAL STAR
Del says, "The best source of info on these drums is a website run by Ralf Bornmann, the leading authority on Star drums." See www.star-drums.de.

JAPAN'S FINEST
The Japanese company Hoshino Gakki produced Star Drums from the mid-'60s up until 1974, thereafter changing the name to Tama.

PHILIPPINE MAHOGANY
Most early Japanese drums feature so-called Philippine 'mahogany' shells, a blanket term for several over-exploited tropical timbers including lauan.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:
SIMON JOHN'S VINTAGE DRUM SHOW
www.vintagedrums.co.uk

"DIALLING IN **THE SNARE TENSION AND HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT IS FIDDLY** COMPARED TO SIMPLER VINTAGE SNARES, BUT ONCE RIGHT, **IT'S GUNSHOT LOUD, CLEAR AND CRISP**."

DEL HARRIES, OWNER

SNAPSHOT
This Moment In History

Neil Peart RIP

12th September 1952 – 7th January 2020

"In the beginning it was all about playing, all we were interested in was playing and technique and experimenting with really unorthodox arrangements. Those were really natural things for us to do, there was no plan, it's just what got us excited. Later we got more interested in arranging in a focused way, and the song, of course. For anyone who's involved in songwriting as opposed to playing, it becomes a lifelong commitment. How to express things better, how to present them better, how to communicate the idea..."

Image: Fin Costello/Redferns

Image: Jesse Grant/Getty

PICS FROM PLANET DRUM

Rhythm goes to NAMM – the biggest drum show on Earth!

Images: James Cumpsty

1. Jim Keltner and Steve Lukather – along with Leland Sklar, Dom Famularo and Paul Quin - were on hand to share their experiences of working in the music industry as part of an educational seminar presented by The Sessions.

2. Ralph Peterson at Mapex.

3. Leading Scottish pipe band drummer, Jim Kilpatrick.

4. Craig Blundell performed on the Roland stand - to launch the company's new V-Drums Acoustic Design kits - and could also be found at Mapex introducing his new signature snare, 'The Machine'.

5. Daru Jones at PDP.

6. Welcome to NAMM 2020!

7. Rhythm editor, Louise King, and Bernard 'Pretty' Purdie.

8. Sabian unveiled their new graphic cymbal line designed, explained company CEO and President, Andy Zildjian, "to help drummers express themselves visually on stage."

9. Rhythm gear editor, Tom Bradley, with co-founder of SJC Custom Drums, Mike Ciprari.

10. Alex Gonzalez and his spectacular drum set at the Paiste booth.

Check out Rhythm's NAMM show coverage at www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Image: Daniel Knighton/Getty

1. A plethora of snares at the Ludwig stand.

2. Ash Soan and Stanton Moore.

3. Alex Acuña drew in the crowds.

4. Emily Dolan Davies and Louise King.

5. Nicko McBrain unveiled his new British Drum Company signature Icarus Kit.

6. Paiste were celebrating the re-release of their famous 602 cymbals.

7. Pearl's distinctive Icon rack system.

8. Russ Miller was on hand to give Tom Bradley a tour of all things Mapex.

9. Will Kennedy in action at Pearl.

10. Omar Hakim received a lifetime achievement award from Roland.

Check out Rhythm's NAMM show coverage at www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

3
PLAY ON
Washburn
GUITARS

7
Pearl
FOLLOW, SHARE,

8
Rhythm

9

10

1. Bill Ward, Mike Portnoy and Brian Frasier-Moore at a joint signing session for Sabian.

2. KJ Sawka at Roland.

3. Sakae Drums.

4. Scott Garrison, Louise King and Blondie's Clem Burke.

5. Drum Workshop's vice president, John Good.

6. Benny Greb unveiled two new signature snare drums at Sonor.

7. Kasabian's Ian Matthews and Tom Bradley.

SEND US YOUR PICS

(or it didn't happen!)

Whether it's meeting your drumming hero, sitting behind a shiny new kit or headlining the local pub with your band, show us what's been banging your drums lately. The best pictures get into print every issue. **Email them to us at info@rhythm-online.com or tweet them to us @RhythmMagazine.**

V-DRUMS TD-27KV

MID-LEVEL V-DRUMS, NEXT-GENERATION PERFORMANCE

The mid-level TD-27KV delivers the immersive sound and response that you only get with V-Drums.
At its heart is the powerful new TD-27 sound engine, filled with premium-grade, fully-customizable drum and cymbal sounds.
Advanced digital triggertechnology detects every playing nuance in ultra-high definition, while large-diameter drum
and cymbal pads offer exceptional feel, presented in a spacious acoustic-style layout.

WWW.ROLAND.COM

Roland

SIMON PHILLIPS & KAZ RODRIGUEZ

FACE TO FACE

Rhythm brings together two of the UK's finest for an in-depth summit on producing, engineering and recording. They tell us why it's all about the sound...

Writer: **Geoff Nicholls** Images: **James Cumpsty**

If you are lucky you may make a good living simply playing the acoustic drum kit. But more than ever today it's important for drummers to develop multiple skills, initially to embrace hybrid acoustic-electronic drumming and programming. Then maybe remote recording, engineering and producing, arranging and composing.

All these areas were explored by Simon Phillips from a young age and Simon's approach made a massive impression on Kaz Rodriguez, growing up in the 2000s. Kaz has duly forged his own multi-faceted style in the modern era.

Simon also pioneered open-handed, ambidextrous playing and extended multi-tom drum sets, following the example set by Billy Cobham from the late 1960s. And like Cobham, Simon became a composer and bandleader in his own right. From his teens, he slotted into the London session scene (his CV is astounding – see biog. on p45), then in 1992 he moved to Los Angeles and took over the drum chair in the band Toto, following the untimely death of groove-guvnor Jeff Porcaro. Simon would eventually engineer and also produce the band.

Kaz Rodriguez grew up entranced by Simon's extensive Tama kit and the fact that Simon, although obviously a world-class drummer, was equally enthralled by engineering, producing and composing. Intuitively Kaz knew that being "more than just a drummer" was the right path to pursue.

Kaz has a condition called synaesthesia, which means he associates musical sounds with specific colours, and this has helped him to compose music with unique character. Already a talented and experienced touring drummer, Kaz found himself in the limelight as a result of releasing online tracks of real substance, composed specifically for drummers to play along with. Unexpectedly, this caught the attention of Aaron Spears, Chris Coleman and other drumming greats, catapulting Kaz to international acclaim.

Although generations apart, Kaz and Simon have much in common. So when Simon played Ronnie Scott's Club in London, during the 30th-anniversary tour of Protocol, Rhythm saw an ideal opportunity to bring the two together.

Kaz: "I am really humbled, Simon, I feel like things have come full circle today. I've watched you since I was a kid. I had this Rhythm poster of you playing. I was nine and my mother said what do you want for Christmas and I said, 'What he's got!' I still have that poster. It's a privilege and an honour to be sharing this with you.

"For years I would busk on the streets in Old Street and Shoreditch. I had this MiniDisc player and I'd play along. I was familiar with you and Toto and I ended up with all the Protocol albums. I was so into it, I used to play along to your tracks. I was 11 years old and every month I made about £30-40. I started adding all these toms and eventually, it was who is this young kid you can't see behind all these toms? It's weird the way things come round, to be able to play the same drums [as you], to be a Tama artist now.

"With you, there was always something more than just drums. You created this movement to be a musician, to be a writer and a producer. I saw you on a clinic and you asked, 'How many people here want to do this for a career?'. And you said you have to give everything, make the sacrifice, it has to be your life, just to do music. That was the thing that struck me: one sentence changed my whole value of how to become a musician, learning what music can be, as a message to people."

FIRST MEETING

Kaz actually met Simon at the 2008 London Zildjian Day at Shepherd's Bush Empire which honoured Ginger Baker. At the time the young Kaz was playing drums for Aruba Red, daughter of Cream bassist, Jack Bruce.

Kaz: "You won't remember, I was really skinny and had no facial hair! I was with Natascha (Natascha Bruce, aka Aruba Red). I saw your set-up and again it spoke so many volumes and colours to me. I shook your hand and I was so nervous. I wanted to ask why did you have so many toms... and so 10 years later I can ask you, what was the method behind that madness?"

Simon: "At first it was the Ludwig catalogues in 1971 or 1973 – there was a picture [the Octaplus first multi-tom kit]. Back then a lot of the drums in the catalogues were not available in England. Basically, you had 4-piece kits. I used to look at the Octaplus and wonder what would it sound like to play that. I was playing with my dad on a 4-piece Hayman. Then I saw Peter Erskine with Stan Kenton and he had a 14" floor tom and a 16". That was the kit I wanted – 13", 14", 16" toms.

"I had a semi deal with Hayman and I ordered a 14" floor tom and it was like [hums melodic variations] suddenly there was light after the drum kit! And that was the start of it. Then it became the fashion to get bigger kits. And then along comes Billy Cobham. He was using one rack and two floors then two racks and two floors and then eventually the second bass drum. And Tony Williams added a third floor tom and went over to big drums. Suddenly you had melodic contrast. And that to me was it. I started adding more toms as I could afford them."

EXPERIMENTS IN SOUND

This kit expansion also started in the days before multiple mics on every drum were commonplace.

Simon: "Most engineers were not using tom mics, just two overheads. Actually, when I started there was one overhead... mono! Two mics on the entire kit!

"I also grew up playing with tape machines. My mum was an amateur recordist and she invested in two old Revox G36s and I learned how to use them. There was one mic, but I found another in a cupboard somewhere and I stuck them up with string onto a music stand as kit-right, kit-left and recorded stereo drums for the first time. Aged eight or nine!

"That was what I was into as a kid, as well as playing drums. But I also loved the sound of records. I studied why certain big band records sounded so cool. When stereo started, you didn't have pan pots on the mixing console; instead you had a three-position toggle: centre, left or right. So, on a lot of those mid-1960s to early-1970s big band records you might hear all the trumpets on the right, and sometimes the drums and bass were on the left. The piano was often left or even centre; the soloist, wherever he was 'panned', would walk forward to get on mic.

"Phil Ramone, who recorded Quincy Jones, had a chamber (a concrete room with a speaker and mic in it), and a ¼" tape machine running with vari-speed, so the signal being sent from the console was delayed because of the distance between the record head and the playback head. Therefore, the reverb was slightly delayed, creating what we now call pre-delay.

SIMON'S GEAR

Tama Starclassic Maple in British Racing Green
Two of 24"x16" bass drums with Sound Focus Rings (SFR)
20"x14" Gong Drum w/SFR on batter head side

TOMS (NO SFR)

18"x14" floor tom
16"x13" rack tom
15"x12" rack tom
14"x11" rack tom
13"x10" rack tom
12"x9" rack tom
10"x7" rack tom
One set of low pitch Octobans

SNARES

14"x6½" Monarch Signature snare drum
12"x5½" Pageant Signature snare drum
10"x5½" Metalworks snare drum

TAMA ROADPRO HARDWARE

2 x HC72BWN straight cymbal stand
3 x HC73BWN boom cymbal stand
1 x custom Octobans/Swish Cymbal/Piccolo snare drum stand
1 x custom Gong Drum stand
2 x MTH909 tom mounts on bass drums
1 x MTH909 tom stand
1 x HT730 drum throne
1 x HS700WN snare stand (for 14")
1 x HS80PW snare stand (for 10")
2 x HP900RS Iron Cobra Rolling Glide kick pedal

ZILDJIAN CYMBALS

Avedis 23" Swish Knocker
Avedis 22" Ride
Avedis 12" Splash
Armand 19" Crash
Armand 18" Crash
Armand 17" Crash
Armand 14" Hi-Hats
22" Oriental Trash piggybacked with 14" Trashformer

Pro Mark Signature sticks
Remo Ambassador heads (Clear on all except snare drums which are Coated)

"Most important is that the kit travels with its own wooden plinth which I set up on. 8'x8'x¾" marine ply. This is essential to giving the kit the proper surface to play on from a song point of view!"

Watch Simon's kit tour now at
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

"TAKE THE SIMPLE WAY, MAKE SOMETHING COHESIVE FROM BEGINNING TO END, SEE THE SONG AS ONE WHOLE PICTURE."

GREATEST HITS
SPD-SX sample pad...takes some beating.
WWW.ROLAND.COM
Ollie Wiseman hybrid setup / Anne Marie tour
Roland

SIMON PHILLIPS, SO FAR...

He's been living in LA since 1992, but Simon Phillips will always be a UK national treasure. He was unquestionably the star drumming virtuoso of his generation, a child prodigy who made his first BBC broadcast aged six and toured professionally with his father Sid Phillips' jazz band from the age of 12.

His dad's gig involved strict tempo reading, always playing for the music, and this early discipline meant Simon was ideally suited to conquer the session world into which he moved seamlessly following a stint aged 16 in the West End musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Producers found he could play anything, economically and brilliantly well. He soon clocked up a CV that includes Mike Oldfield, Roxy Music, 10cc, Whitesnake, Peter Gabriel, The Human League, Mick Jagger, Pete Townshend and Robert Palmer.

"The 1970s were the hey-day – three sessions a day, two drum kits, leap-frogging round the studios," he told Rhythm back in 2006.

Simultaneously, Simon became famous for his vast double bass drum kit, which he played in an open-handed style. "I saw Billy Cobham in 1974 and I went oh wow, ok. Then I saw Lenny White – I sat right behind him – and I thought I've got to play that way. I swapped over (to left-hand lead) and suddenly I could set up how I wanted."

Inevitably Simon became a star of the clinic circuit and was soon touring and recording with legends of jazz-rock Jack Bruce, Jeff Beck, Stanley Clarke and Al Di Meola.

Jeff Porcaro was a huge fan and following Jeff's untimely death in 1992, Simon was approached by Porcaro's multi-Grammy winning band Toto. A seemingly impossible task, Simon of course nailed it, remaining a member right up until 2014.

Eventually he would co-compose, play drums on, engineer and produce the band's 2006 album, *Falling In Between* – illustrating his other passion: from childhood he'd been fascinated with sound engineering and producing. In LA he ran his own studio producing numerous projects, including Virgil Donati and ex-Dream Theater Derek Sherinian's Planet X – *MoonBabies* (2002).

"People know me as a drummer, but I've been engineering professionally since 1983. And I learned the old-fashioned way, using real gear."

Rediscovering his jazz drumming roots, between 2011 and 2016 Simon floored us all over again as he revelled in perhaps his most sophisticated gig yet, recording and touring three albums with The Trio Project of Japanese jazz pianist sensation Hiromi Uehara. Meanwhile his own band Protocol are currently touring, celebrating their 30th anniversary.

▷ It had this most incredible sound. Listen to *Walking In Space* by Quincy Jones (1969), it's beautiful. Actually, it's almost a little too much! But anything that was a gimmick, newly discovered, would be featured.

"Like the mic on the hi-hat... Rudy Van Gelder, that great engineer who did most of the Blue Note recordings, started putting a hi-hat mic up. And he had it panned way to the right and, in my opinion, way too loud and seemingly distorted! That might have been my stylus though... So weird, but it was a new sound and I loved all of it."

DEPTH OF COLOUR

Kaz: "That is what fascinates me – you looking further than just the actual drums, to what elements give that sound. That to me is how you paint the colours, through microphones and acoustic nuances."

Simon: "But also it's working with amazing engineers. And they are still like that. I just heard a record Glyn Johns (The Who, Eagles, Eric Clapton) recently made. It was recorded in three or four days and I'm thinking how does he get that precision, that depth, that 3D? Because you [Kaz] say you hear in colours, but I think of recording in visual images. Before I do a project I have a mental picture of how I want it to sound, literally. How I want to pan everybody, that depth and presence. Audio is a one-dimensional system, so how do you get this [Simon indicates depth]? Actually, you can, but this is the problem with how we record now:

▷

there is no depth. If you take physics, it takes sound one millisecond to travel one foot, very roughly. So if you have mics further away from an instrument, isn't it going to be a little late? That is where you start to get your depth. That is my theory anyway. Those older records sound a bit more three dimensional because they didn't have every mic positioned two inches away from an instrument. That's the secret.

"And also, if you record a band live you get leakage, spill. Those older records – the drum kit is over that side of the room and by the time the piano mics pick it up, from maybe 15 feet away, that's 15 milliseconds late. So already you have created depth."

Kaz: "Another thing that fascinates me is your recording trick placing the paint can in the bass drum..."

Simon: "Oh, I have stolen everything, because that's how you learn! The paint can was fairly recent. The first thing was the towel and internal mic. And that came from Ken Scott recording Tony Williams on Stanley Clarke's second solo album [*Stanley Clarke*, 1974]. Actually, it was on the track 'Lopsy Lu', because that is where you hear the bass drum solo. I am thinking, that mic must be inside the drum, that's the only way it could sound like that.

"So for years I tried (to get that sound). I got a cable, cut the XLR off, threaded it through the air hole, stripped and re-soldered it. I got my AKG D12 and plugged it in. The D12 is just hanging there and if you hit really hard it starts swinging! Eventually, I got to work with Ken Scott in 1980 on *There & Back* (Jeff Beck) and he showed me how he did it. I stole that for many years and modified it.

"The paint can came from Eddie Kramer [Hendrix, Beatles, Zeppelin]. He said I want to put a paint can in your bass drum and I said, 'What colour?' Ho ho. So we had the same tuning and a gallon of paint right in the centre on a piece of foam. As I played it I could feel it – it feels denser. Then I went into the control room to have a listen and was blown away. Totally flat, no eq!

"So now I always do that when recording, but it doesn't sound so good live, because there's a lot of mass absorbing energy, making it harder to play. When recording you play for only five minutes and have a break, but live you play two hours without stopping and you can really feel that."

"HE SAID I WANT TO PUT **A PAINT CAN IN YOUR BASS DRUM** AND I SAID, **'WHAT COLOUR?'...**"

SIMON PHILLIPS

PRODUCTION AND CREATIVITY

Kaz: "I always look back at how music used to be recorded because I feel there is too much ease now. We're able to program and use all these plug-ins. Like, I'm working on this computer game right now and doing everything myself, which is great, but at the same time what is wrong with having actual musicians? The thing I hate is, they say this is for a big computer game, and I think, great, I can have this musician and that musician and go into RAK Studios or wherever. But they go, no, no, we love your soundscape, we just want you to play the piano, program it. And I go, there's no fun in that [he laughs]!"

Simon: "There isn't and creatively you don't get to vibe off each other. You can actually make a record quicker if you get everybody in the studio and let them play. Imagine doing a programmed record without everybody in the studio? It would be horrible, I may just as well put out the demos... Oh, I just did [he laughs]!

"And that's the problem with recording today. There is often no budget so everyone records separately and you lose your magic. This year I've done quite a bit of recording and what dawned on me is that nobody is actually producing anymore."

SOCIAL MEDIA

Another massive difference in today's scene is the presence and influence of social media. Just how has this impacted on their careers?

Kaz: "I don't have a website... I use Instagram so that I have a photo album of memories. But I landed the Josh Groban gig because of Instagram! They needed a drummer to tour... and saw I was a composer and a drummer...

"The moral is basically that I wanted to be a composer first. And for years there was a Kaz who made all these songs for drummers and a Kaz who was a drummer and they thought it was two different people. I did a video on my iPhone, in the studio writing the songs, and then as a drummer playing the songs. And that is where the magic happened, by using that platform for 30 seconds it created that curiosity: I want to know more about that person."

Simon: "I try to keep as far away from social media as possible. I embrace it resistingly [laughs]. I let the younger guys in the band embrace it for me. But I do have a website... and it does work, especially on the recording side. People ask me to mix projects and a lot of sessions come via there. But I see problems with social media. Everyone wants to be the first to put it up online, it's their 'big moment'..."

Kaz: "I agree, you should enjoy the moment you're in. I did a jazz gig, as a guest, then I see all these phones coming out. I stopped playing, got the mic and said thank you for being here, but I see only one person actually being here right now! The other 99 percent, please put your phones down and enjoy the experience."

SYMMETRICAL WORLD

The hybrid set-ups of modern touring kits call on the drummer's dexterity in new ways. Simon's open-handed playing has long been another big influence on Kaz's style.

Simon: "You play both ways?"

Kaz: "When I was a kid I was given a scholarship to Morley College CYM [Centre For Young Musicians]. There was a drum teacher there called Mark Bryant – a phenomenal jazz drummer, he could play left and right. He gave me a five-minute lesson and he said sit on the drums and show me how you play. He stopped me and lowered the hi-hat. He said now play left-handed. I said that is wrong, so he said, OK, see you next week. Then the following week he did the same thing. And this continued until I realised I had to play like this [left hand lead on hi-hat, arms not crossed]. So for two years, he taught me to play a left-handed kit. And I could also play right-handed anyway, which is my natural way. So I realised I had developed this whole symmetrical world."

MORE THAN A DRUMMER

Kaz: "Simon, what are the main things to tell the younger generation today, to be a musician rather than just playing the drums?"

Simon: "Well I think a drummer *should* be a musician. Regardless of whether you do anything else you have got to think musically. Learn how to play a tune. The great thing about doing all those sessions back in the early 1970s was that every day, three times a day, there was new material. And they were all different styles. Some songs would play themselves. Others needed a lot of sorting out. Someone writes an arrangement, or you hear a demo, and it has got so many accents, every bar there's something. Back in those days, everything would be pushed [Simon hums pushed accents]. So you have to make decisions, and it's only by the experience of doing this that you realise you may get a chart but you don't always have to play everything written on it. Take the simple way, try to make something cohesive from beginning to end, see the song as one whole picture."

801
801 Live (1976)
Early, acclaimed experimental work by Roxy Music guitarist Phil Manzanera with his band mate, fledgling genius producer Brian Eno. Simon says, "An important album – live – a real underground thing that still sells – pivotal at the time, magical. Eno was a manipulator, important for the guidance of that band. A lovely man." There's a strangely atmospheric 'You Really Got Me' and a fabulous, imaginatively inventive reworking of The Beatles' 'Tomorrow Never Knows', driven along by Simon's funky-rocky drums and a mega bass line from Bill McCormick.

Jeff Beck
There and Back (1980)
Joining up with Jeff Beck, the most talented of British rock guitarists, for this timeless instrumental extravaganza cemented Simon's reputation as the UK's foremost fusion drummer. He seized the opportunity to contribute half the album's compositions along with keyboardist Tony Hymas, including 'Space Boogie' and 'The Pump'. The former is a perennial favourite of drummers worldwide with its scorching moving-time double bass drum grooves building on earlier work by Billy Cobham. The latter was memorably featured in Tom Cruise's 1983's movie *Risky Business*.

VIDEO LESSONS

Revisit this essential series of video lessons, recorded exclusively for Rhythm, to get Simon's top tips on recording, achieving a big drum sound, improving dynamics and open-handed playing...

1. RECORDING

"The most important thing is knowing what to play to get the best sound. When I'd do a take, in some of my tom fills I was playing the bass drum. It may be fine from a timekeeping point of view but sonically it doesn't work. Because you've got a low frequency from the kick and toms, it ends up cancelling [each other] out and making the kit sound smaller, and the *track* sound smaller. What I started to do was stop playing except for the fill, but the fill has to carry the groove – the groove must never stop. That way it leaves a lot of air and space to reproduce the sound of the drums, but without breaking the groove. Playing a little quieter will pull more tone out of the drum. If you're having trouble with a groove, if you lighten up a bit, the groove will start to happen."

2. GET A BIG SOUND FROM YOUR KIT

"I tune the drums up, I use no damping and I let them ring like crazy. Most people would think that would be impossible to mic up, but it's not a problem at all. One thing to remember is a lot of drummers try to make their drums sound perfect where they're sitting, which is less than three feet away. No instruments sounds right that close – it sounds right when you're 10ft, or 20ft away. I thought, I'm going to tune these drums up, let them ring, they're going to be louder. Therefore, when I record, or go through a PA, I don't get any problems because I'm not having to turn all these gains up. It also gives me dynamics."

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF DYNAMICS

"I don't just use dynamics in terms of, this section is going to be loud, this section quieter, [but as] constant dynamics. If I'm playing a song, a lot of my fills are not always at the same level; they may start quieter, often when I go around the toms I make a little crescendo. Or, if I'm doing a transition to a quieter part, I may do a decrescendo. These little bits of dynamics are so important, they really add to the fluidity of a song. I've really concentrated on trying to play very intensely, but quieter. I probably play in some cases at half the level I used to. It makes the music breathe, it gives you further to go and then when you really want to explode and play loudly then you've got it. You've got a huge dynamic range."

4. OPEN-HANDED PLAYING

"I started to play right-handed, then one day the drum kit was growing – it grew another bass drum, a few more tom-toms... That was a problem because, in order to play right-handed, the hit-hat has to be higher than it is now [on my kit]. I was an impressionable 17-year-old and looks were important, so I thought what if I lower the hi-hat, lower the toms so it looks cool and then learn to play left-handed? The concept of open-handed playing to me then was part of a balance thing. I loved the fact that I could be doing something with my left hand [on the hat], leaving this [right] hand to do pretty much anything you can imagine. It was a different way of playing, but an elegant way of playing..."

Watch Simon's Top Tips now at www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Toto
Falling In Between (2006)
Toto's 12th studio album and a highpoint of Simon's 21 year career with the band when they entrusted him to engineer and co-produce the entire album in his own studio. Of 'Bottom of Your Soul' Simon explains, "Dave Paich played me the basic song and I said I know exactly what to do with this. I started making a percussion loop and as the band arrived I had them playing different percussion – starting with slapping the wood on top of the organ. I did the drums in one pass. An effortless track. I wish it would have been a bigger hit!"

Hiromi
Alive (2014)
A dream gig for Simon, further enhancing his already mega reputation. Hiromi's atomic-fuelled energy and dynamic swoops demand the utmost in skill, control and lightning reflexes from her band. 'Player' has sudden changes of pace and direction and a fast straight-ahead passage in the middle. 'Dreamer' starts with Octobans over plucked piano bass segueing into a typically inventive cross-stick and tom beat encircling the melody. The majestic 'Life Goes On' brings out the best in Simon who closes the album soloing like his life depends on it over the strident piano chords.

Simon Phillips
Protocol II (2014)
Another addition to Simon's string of solo albums stretching back to *Protocol I* (1988) and encompassing many styles. Although the band was hastily assembled, the spontaneity lends itself to lots of fresh, risky playing. There's great interplay with all band members and a feast of fabulous drumming throughout. 'Wildfire' drives along like crazy with exemplary drumming intertwining with Ernest Tibbs' bass. Final track 'Enigma' has the band doing clever rhythmic modulations in threes, climaxing with more of Simon's thrilling, powerful drumming over a band ostinato.

HYBRID: The Next

Words: **David West** Images: **James Cumpsty**

In a North London studio, Andy Gangadeen, Oli Wiseman and Kaz Rodriguez have assembled the mother of all hybrid drum kits, a huge beast built of acoustic drums and pads designed to be played by three drummers working together as one. The impetus behind this Frankenstein's monster of a set-up is the hotly anticipated return of The Bays, Gangadeen's ground-breaking improvisational dance music project.

Generation

There's nothing more bonkers than being in a band with two other drummers," declares Andy Gangadeen, sitting in front of the new, improved, bigger than ever Gangascope in a rehearsal studio in London. This imposing kit, a blend of acoustic drums, cymbals, and more than 50 electronic pads, will be the workhouse for the reincarnation of The Bays. The last time The Bays was a going concern was in 2009 before Gangadeen landed the gig played drums for Chase & Status. Originally, the project saw Gangadeen working with a bassist and keyboard players to make live dance music, but this time around it's going to be all drummers, with Oli Wiseman and Kaz Rodriguez joining Gangadeen at the helm of the Gangascope. The three drummers are friends and the seed for joining forces was planted two years ago when they were all together for a video shoot for Zildjian. "It went really well," recalls Gangadeen, "We thought off the back of that, why don't we try and do some work?" They started writing material before everyone became too busy with other gigs until in the winter of 2019 they decided to bring the idea back to life. "I was thinking we should look at this project again because we had some good material," says Gangadeen. "Then I was getting more and more calls asking if The Bays were interested in doing some festivals this year and I thought, well, why not just join the two things together?"

Why did you want to have three drummers in this new version of The Bays?

Andy Gangadeen: "When I was MDing for various bands during the time I stopped doing The Bays and was doing Chase & Status, one of the approaches I was doing was I got one of them to play the bassline on pads because it was more of a visual thing, but it worked as well. It was taking the idea of having drummers doing the beat but also playing melodic stuff and basslines and vocal samples, that's all achievable now in a performance sense. So I thought, let's just do it with a bunch of drummers instead of having keyboard players or bass players."

In a sense, has the technology caught up with your concept?

AG: "Absolutely, yeah. Somebody like Herbie Hancock, who was known for being a great jazz pianist totally embraced technology when the Fender Rhodes came out and then he was a master of all the synth stuff. It just goes to show that him being a virtuoso on the piano was one thing and people being amazing at drums is one thing, but if you bring in the advancement of technology with electronics and hybrid, it opens up a whole new world. It's using your skillset but on a different platform."

How do you divide the music between the three of you?

AG: "Before, The Bays was completely improv, so we'd rehearse things individually and then just bring them together and that was the first time all of us had heard those parts. It was quite haphazard and there were moments when it didn't quite work. As the years went on we got better and better at tweaking it but it was still not a very good system, so this time round we've come up with basic tracks that we're all developing individually and we're splitting those parts up over the pads. By the use of Ableton we're able to play the track verbatim but also play the track in reverse order if necessary. There's an amazing techno DJ called Richard Hawtin and basically, he'll take a track and break it up into 16ths so it's all in a jigsaw, and then reassemble the track live. Obviously, the kicks are still happening on the downbeat but everything in-between that is all jumbled up. He can take a track and reassemble it so it sounds like a new track and that's the principle we're using. Each component of the chord or whatever can be broken down into small bits that we can then reassemble as we're playing, and it will all match up key-wise and sonically as well."

Is this challenging to you as drummers since you'll be playing basslines and melodies as well as grooves?

Kaz Rodriguez: "Everyone sees this two-dimensional world of the drummer just being able to hit a pad, for example, and it plays a sample. With Andy being one of my heroes when I was a kid and Oli being one of my best mates, we both share that passion and connection with Andy, the musicality, we like to take things a bit further. Playing the melodies is still rhythmical, we are being drummers but we're also being musicians and that's the kind of thing that makes it different. It's this synergy that we all share that is able to glue us to become essentially one person."

Oli Wiseman: "As a drummer, you can practice your chops and turn up with your sticks but there is so much more now that you need to be able to bring to the table in order to work professionally. There is a big element of being a producer as a drummer now. Everyone in the last couple of years is trying to develop their version of a hybrid drum set-up and that requires a drummer to be able to split up melodic parts of a track, work out how things are produced and understand that process. In the last few years, Andy has shown me the way of hybrid drumming and encouraged me. I've learned so much on the gigs I've been working on, and we all have. It's taking that production platform but pulling it into a live show, hence this idea of three drummers putting the whole thing together."

This is very different from taking something that someone else made in the studio and playing it live. You are the creators.

AG: "It's ultimately having that amount of control over it. It's all the skillsets and knowledge that we've absorbed working with the different projects we've been involved in. You absorb it and reinterpret it in your own way. It's all about knowledge. The great thing about being a session player is that you're working with really good people who are possibly the best in the game and you have a real insight into the workings of how they make stuff. It's amazing to have that access to that amount of knowledge."

KR: "A lot of people tend to find the boring thing, which they side-track a lot, is the programming and sending information and loading samples and creating the songs. That's the labour but that's the part that makes it worth it. Playing drums, for us, is the part that we find simpler because we've done it for so many years. The challenge and the learning curve is the programming. We've all geeked out, gone on YouTube, or read a book, we're the ones who go, 'Here's the instruction manual for this,' and we go, 'I'm going to read it!' rather than just throw it out like it was an Ikea manual."

AG: "It's a commitment. Just as you put X amount of hours into drumming, you've got to put the same amount of hours into production, composition, understanding how stuff works. It's hours of sitting down and just doing it, basically. You can't fast-track that process."

OW: "I think because technology has caught up with a lot of these concepts, that has become an extension of playing your instrument now. So I believe if you're learning the drums and you're learning programming, you are still learning your instrument. It's just different elements of that which allow you to achieve different things. Electronic drums are not just drum sounds on a pad, they're an extension of what you are as a drummer."

“IT’S ALWAYS BEEN **ABOUT THE LIVE EXPERIENCE.** IT’S NOT A RECREATIVE THING, **IT’S ALWAYS ABOUT** WHAT HAPPENS JUST IN **THAT MOMENT OF TIME.**”

ANDY GANGADEEN

Perhaps appropriately for one of the pioneers of live drum and bass and hybrid drumming, Andy Gangadeen studied electronics at college before moving into music. He’s played with the Spice Girls, Lisa Stansfield, Massive Attack, and Chase & Status, and is a role model and mentor to young players interested in exploring the landscape where acoustic and electronic drumming comes together. “The technology is there for you,” says Gangadeen. “It’s a limitless thing. It’s all pretty much affordable now, where before it wasn’t. A Fairlight sampler was 30 grand and you could sample in for eight seconds. You can sample more on your phone now if you want to. Things have moved on.” Now that The Bays are back in action, Gangadeen is ready to stretch his musical muscles. “The Bays has always been about trying to do something different in the realms of improv and electronic music, that’s its ethos.”

It's indicative of the fact that in EDM and modern pop music, the sound of the drums is often the sound of the song?

AG: "That's right. I remember I got asked to do Zildjian Day 1996. Rhythm did a review of it and I read it the other day. I said then there is a real mismatch between the music being produced and what drummers are actually playing... So many tracks are so driven by the beat, the drums. Drummers haven't really got their head around that – I can hear that, but do I have the desire to play that? They're missing a really big part of it because it's substantial music that's appealing so why on earth not try to recreate it? It's got incredible energy."

KR: "And it's fun. It's all about improvising and that's what is exciting. Every show will be a different show. That's one thing I find fascinating because I see a lot of people playing shows and it's the same, they do another day, same thing, but if we're doing loads of shows it's going to be a different experience every single time."

Improvising is quite rare in the hybrid, electronic drumming world, plus it's unusual to see drummers improvising with each other!

KR: "It's all within the heart of the groove."

OW: "That's the key with it. What we are creating is still firmly within the remits of

KAZ RODRIGUEZ

"It's a dream to be doing a project with what I would consider family," says Kaz Rodriguez, who has drummed for such big names as Josh Groban and Jessie Ware as well as releasing his own music. His interest in hybrid drumming began with adding a Roland SPD-S to his set-up and some inspiration from Andy Gangadeen. "When I was younger, I was obsessed with Andy," says Rodriguez. "Sorry to freak him out, because I'm sitting right next to him, I was obsessed with him. I remember seeing a Maida Vale session of him having an MPC on the floor and it had pads and he was trying to explain it, showing an audience how he plays samples." Now he wants to inspire others in turn – "I started playing drums because I wanted to share what I could do with the world or if I could change one person's life."

the style that we're playing. That can be anything from building up to the drops and how long they're going to last, reading the crowd, if they're into it we can keep the same drop going for five minutes. If they're not, we can keep it going for 30 seconds."

You're keeping acoustic instruments in the set-up. Why not go fully electronic?

AG: "It's nice to get the transience of acoustic drums in there, it has a nice blend. Playing static samples is cool but sometimes you can blend it with stuff that has transience, it's going to sound different every time depending on how you're playing it. All those random elements do make it more interesting. It's more enhancing what's there, getting a blend of the two, which is the key."

Will there be any recordings?

AG: "The Bays never put out stuff. It was always about the live experience. We always put all our shows up on the website for people to download for free back in the day. I haven't really thought that bit out yet. For me, it's always been about the live experience. It's not a recreative thing, it's always about what happens just in that moment of time."

It must be gratifying that people are still interested in what you're doing with The Bays?

AG: "Yeah. I thought it was dead in the water, so it's good."

KR: "Whenever I go to the States, I'm always bragging about The Bays. A lot of people that I've spoken to, like jazz/experimental drummers, people like Zach Danziger or Mark Guiliana, I remember speaking to Mark a couple of years ago about Andy and Mark is like, 'I love Andy, man, send him my love.' Andy doesn't know this stuff because he's so humble. He's really influenced a lot of underground drummers, especially hip-hop players. I always talk to them about The Bays and they're all on my socials going, 'Oh man, I can't wait to see it.' That's exciting because we're bringing something back to life that has a historical statement. We had this conversation about learning, and people are always wanting to learn in the present and try to continue in the future, but I always said we have to look back to go forward. Look at jazz drummers that you hear, you can go from Buddy Rich or go back to Gene Krupa, or go back to Baby Dodds, or go back to Chick Webb and all those eras with Dixieland and then bring it forward, then you have made something that's different."

AG: "It's that thing of take from the past but don't live in the past."

OLI WISEMAN

A drummer since the age of 14, when his itch to play was ignited by Nirvana's *Nevermind* album, Oli Wiseman was drawn to the world of hybrid drumming when he first heard The Prodigy. "I was like, wow, this is rock music with massive electronic sounds, that's my bag, 100%," says Wiseman. Then he saw Chase & Status with Andy Gangadeen laying down the beats. "I was massively influenced straightaway, but I didn't really know where to start. Going through college, it led me to audition for a band, one of the guys in that is actually the frontman of Chase & Status now, and that led to me meeting Andy. Ever since Andy has been a massive influence, showing me the ropes with electronic drumming." Now, Wiseman is a flagbearer for hybrid drumming, whether playing for pop star Anne-Marie, or as one of the new faces in The Bays.

What advice would you give to someone starting out in hybrid drumming?

OW: "Firstly, I would say start off with what you have. Let's say you may have an SPD... work with that and learn as much as you can...with what you've got... Roland and lots of companies are all pushing the boundaries now with this stuff which is amazing for everyone, but start with what you've got, once you feel you've gone as far as you can go with that then you'll know where you need to progress with it."

AG: "That's a good point but also go out clubbing because this music is meant for that environment, you need to experience it at that level to see how it works. Unless you're actually in that moment feeling it, you'll never know why this music is being made. You need to feel that reaction that you get when you hear a massive drop, it's overwhelming. In order to be able to interpret it, you need to hear it at that grassroots level..."

OW: "In terms of piecing everything together, then you'll understand more about how those meters work. You go to a festival tent and you see 10,000 people all dancing to the same tempo, the image of that – when you've got 10,000 people jumping up and down to one drop – is amazing. As a drummer, you're looking at that going, well that's why I've got to be on the money. If you've got three drummers all at different tempos, it's not going to work."

KR: "...I have synaesthesia, so I see colours through frequencies and sounds. When we're hearing things like drops...I know when something feels right. Things that we've been writing, it's exciting and my mind goes, 'Ah, this is the right way.' If you go to a club and you're listening to music pumping and things are dropping, you want that same feeling in our music."

It's easy to focus on programming and equipment, but if you're not getting an emotional reaction in your audience...?

AG: "What's the point? It has to connect with people or there's zero point doing it. You might as well stay home in your bedroom practising because it needs to have that cause and effect, that reaction."

KR: "Even writing the music that we have, now that we understand the formula of what we're doing with the pads, we're trying to make it simple and that's the element of electronic music, simplicity."

AG: "You just need a beat, a bass, some chords and a vocal. If you can make a track out of those four components, then you're home and dry."

See The Bays live at The Jazz Café, London, on 6th April.

For a tour of the Gangascope go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

ENTER THE GANGASCOPE

With three drum kits and 52 pads, the new Gangascope is a behemoth of a set-up. In its embryonic stage, it was 20-odd pads set up in a straight line to see if the concept of three drummers playing all the parts could actually work in practice. "We did a lot of MIDI programming, tested things, some things worked, some didn't," says Wiseman. Plus, they wanted something that would be eye-catching as well as practical. Andy Gangadeen has been using a one-man version of the Gangascope since his time with Chase & Status, and that became the starting point. "In terms of the style of music that we're trying to create, EDM, dance music, because it's such a visual thing anyway, three drummers playing everything, let's build something around that," says Wiseman. "I suggested to Andy, 'Well, what about doing something with that? You've worked with that for such a long time, it looks amazing.' He said he had another one and then it developed into some discussions and maybe a couple of beers and now this." They joined two Gangascope racks together to make the new, larger version that can accommodate three drummers, their kits, and 52 pads. "It's worked out all right, it's always good to have some sort of signature thing, something that becomes an identity," says Gangadeen. Most of the pads are

grouped in sets of eight. "Each one of us can play either the bassline or the chords," says Gangadeen. "It gives us a lot of flexibility in that sense. It's not a chromatic octave as such, but we figured we can condense it all down to about eight notes. If we want to use more notes than that, in Ableton we worked out this patch system so every two bars it can go to another bank and give you another set of notes so where there's a sequence we can have a whole range of notes, it just drops them in."

For Wiseman, the rig allows the players to work in a manner analogous to DJs who do live production on stage. "Imagine it as a production station where three drummers can improvise within the realms of the track and the tempo," says Wiseman. "It's dance music, people need to be able to dance to it, so the discipline is consistency and accuracy with regards to all the parts working together and then the improvisation goes around the framework we put in with regards to MIDI, pads, and programming."

Rehearsals will allow the trio to iron out any kinks and become comfortable inside the Gangascope. "The whole point of it is to get really au fait with this system," says Gangadeen, "Obviously it will take a while for it to become a totally natural way of doing things but it's like anything, you've got to put the work in to get it."

GEAR

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3 x Roland TM6 Pro
4 x Roland PDX-6 V-Pad
8 x Roland PDX-8 V-Pad
4 x Drum Tech F.A.T. KAT Pedal
3 x Drum Tech Pole Pad Pro
2 x Roland KT-10 Kick Trigger Pedal

KEYS, BASS, VOX AND FX SOUNDS
4 x Roland TD-50 Module
2 x Roland TMC6 Trigger to MIDI Converter
24 x Roland PDX-6 V-Pad
8 x Roland PD8 Dual-Trigger Pad
4 x Drum Tech Pole Pad Pro
iConnectivity iConnectMIDI4+
iConnectivity PlayAUDIO12 switcher unit
2 x MacBook Pro running Ableton Live 10
Akai APC40 Ableton Live Performance Controller
Behringer X32 Rack digital mixer with P16s
Icon G-Board USB MIDI Foot Controller

ACOUSTICS
Natal Originals Series Walnut Drum Kit
Mapex Saturn V Drum Kit
Tama Starclassic Bubinga Drum Kit
Zildjian Cymbals: K, A, Special Dry EFX, A-Custom and Stacks

CUSTOM RACK
Designed and built by AG and Oli incorporating Gibraltar Clamps

Gear!

The latest kits and the new gear drummers need – reviewed and rated by our team of experts

Evans UV2 Drum Heads
p66

With the NAMM Show already starting to feel like a distant memory on the one hand, on the other we're still buzzing from all the amazing new product announcements for 2020. Much of this exciting new gear is already in the pipeline for review so keep your eyes peeled for your favourite brands in forthcoming issues. We'd also love to hear from you if there is anything specific that you'd like to see our reviewers cast their expert eyes and ears over.

Kicking off this issue's gear section we have Mark Whitlam checking out a special 21st anniversary kit from custom UK drum builder, Jalapeno Drums. The 21 Kit features wooden hoops, and the mighty birch shells use one ply for every year the company is celebrating in production. If one kit isn't enough to satisfy your needs, this issue also sees Matt Fisher taking SJC's upgraded Pathfinder kit for a spin.

You'll also find De Broize Custom Drums returning for review with a trio of walnut snare drums, a new company – Vulcan Cymbals – making their debut with the intriguing Dark Master range and Evans' latest UV2 heads.

Don't forget to check out the accompanying demo videos on our YouTube channel.

Tom Bradley

Rhythm Gear Editor

Meet Rhythm's Reviewers

Rhythm has been reviewing the gear drummers need for decades. Our team of expert reviewers have sat behind countless kits on stage and in the studio so you can rely on them to bring you the right verdict. Plus we asked them what was the best piece of drumming advice they had ever received?

TOM BRADLEY

With an unquenchable thirst for new drum gear, Tom is perfectly placed to be Rhythm's reviews editor. He's not only a longstanding member of our review team but also a lecturer at BIMM and a busy performing drummer. You may recognise Tom as the man behind the kit in many of the online gear videos on our YouTube channel.

BEST PIECE OF DRUMMING ADVICE I'VE BEEN GIVEN:
"Not 'advice' per se but learning the Moeller technique absolutely transformed my playing. It felt like going back to square one at first but ultimately gave me much more speed and control."

MARK WHITLAM

Mark is a freelance musician who has played for varied artists, from Mercury Prize nominee Eliza Carthy through to jazz and funk legend Pee Wee Ellis. He is currently one-quarter of ECM recording artist Iain Ballamy's new band, featuring pianist Jason Rebello. Mark is a senior lecturer at BIMM Institute Bristol, where he has taught for the last ten years.

BEST PIECE OF DRUMMING ADVICE I'VE BEEN GIVEN:
"Courtesy of Ralph Salmins: 'Stop thinking!' At that time I was micro-analysing myself while playing. As a result, I was never fully present in the music, or grooving. It's an easy trap we often fall into."

Vulcan Dark Master Cymbals **p70**

De Broize Walnut Collection **p68**

Jalapeno 21 Kit **p60**

SJC Pathfinder Kit **p64**

Rhythm Verdict

The **RHYTHM RECOMMENDED** award is given to those products that score seven or eight out of ten. These are products that, although not quite scoring top marks, are strong products in their field.

The **RHYTHM STAR BUY** is awarded to those products that score nine or even ten out of ten for design, construction, function and value.

Rhythm Ratings

Here's what our ratings represent.

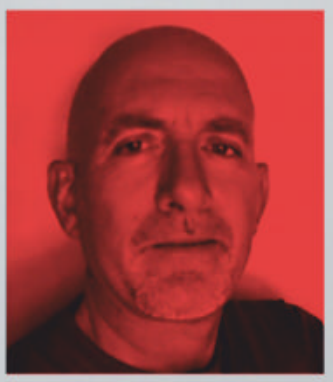
Poor: Sub-standard product	1 - 2
Average: Acceptable but uninspiring	3 - 4
Good: Above average	5 - 6
Excellent: Superior product	7 - 8
Outstanding: Impossible to fault	9 - 10

For videos of gear reviewed go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

GEOFF NICHOLLS

A regular contributor to Rhythm for over 20 years, Geoff is a musician, author, journalist, and lecturer. In the '70s he signed to Decca, EMI and Phonogram in various bands. He was then presenter on BBC's award-winning *Rockschool* in 1984 and 1987. His books include The *Drum Book: A History Of The Rock Drum Kit* and *The Drum Handbook*..

BEST PIECE OF DRUMMING ADVICE I'VE BEEN GIVEN:
"To paraphrase Steve Gadd's words when asked how he approaches playing a new tune: start by finding the simplest groove that works. You can always add more, but stripping back is harder."



ADAM JONES

Playing for over four decades, Adam's influences are seriously varied. "I have sat kit-side in a plethora of pop, punk, ska, jazz, soul, folk and even glam rock bands; many of them average, some pretty decent and a handful seriously good," he says. "After all this time I suppose I really ought to know better, but some habits last a lifetime."

BEST PIECE OF DRUMMING ADVICE I'VE BEEN GIVEN:
"Everyone, and I really mean everyone, makes mistakes – it's part of being human. So, when the unexpected inevitably occurs be ready to react, recover and carry on with confidence intact. Don't dwell on what's happened, concentrate on the bars ahead."

Jalapeno Drums 21st Anniversary Kit

The prominent '21' badge not only refers to the anniversary year, but also to the number of plies of Finnish birch these drums are made from

Words: **Mark Whitlam**

PRICE: £2,800

Let me state this from the outset: there is nothing generic or mainstream about this set of drums. Nor should there be, as this unique instrument has been produced by David Nuttall in honour of his company, Jalapeno Drums, reaching its 21st anniversary. The prominent '21' badge displayed front and centre on each drum not only refers to the anniversary year, but to the number of plies of Finnish birch from which the drums are made. Yes, that's right, 21-ply.

Taking these drums out of the cases, the first thing you notice is the smoked sunburst-style matte finish of the birch. It's a classy choice, and while it won't be to everyone's taste, the understated look works particularly well fading into the large wooden hoops on all the drums. It would be interesting to see this fade design in a lacquer finish too, which could bring even more detail to the grain of the wood and look impressive under stage lighting. However, I'm not convinced that glitzy stage work is what this instrument is primarily intended for. Taking this beast along to the brand new Top Rank Studios, it became clear that this kit felt very much at home in that environment and sounded great under microphones (more on that later).

The next attention grabber is the interesting dimensions of the bass drum: 24"x13". This is an interesting take on the common vintage depth of 14" and instantly evokes ideas of playing heavy and wide-open rock grooves. Tuning the heads to a medium tension with no internal dampening, the bass drum gives a thunderously rich tone, with a defined pitch. The shallow depth of the drum plays a large part in this tonally rich quality, as can be heard in John Bonham's legendary sound from his 26"x14" bass drum used on most Led Zeppelin recordings. Deeper drums tend to offer greater attack and a cannon-like punch but are often lacking in the tone department. The Jalapeno still delivers a clear and fast attack and sounds immense with a high-end dynamic mic a few inches away, off-centre. The physical response from this large drum head didn't lend itself well to busier funk parts, and the tone of the drum really wants you to be occupying more open, heavier beats. With some dampening on the resonant head, a more direct sound resulted, which translated well through the mics. I would avoid putting much, if any, dampening internally, as the tone of the drum is its signature and seems as though it doesn't want to be compromised.

I mentioned the wooden hoops earlier, which are featured on the toms and snare drum. This not only provides a vintage look but a warm, focused sound. Aside from looking decidedly old school and classy, the wooden hoops tend to reduce the high-frequency overtones from the drums compared to their traditional triple-flange metal counterparts.

With the kit set up in a good-sized live room (about 7m² with a vaulted double-height ceiling) the recording engineer and I are surprised at just how warm and focused the toms are in the space. They almost sound pre-EQ'd, with a strong fundamental pitch, little in the way of bright overtones (thanks, wooden hoops) and a real sense of powerful body in their tone, without being particularly loud. In fact, when we recorded this kit to listen back, no EQ needed to be applied to the instrument – it appears that microphones love it!

They Say:

DAVID NUTTALL
Company Director

Q. What kind of player would you expect this drum kit to appeal to?
"I think this 21 Series of drums is most ideally situated for drummers who do a lot of studio work. The full-but-controlled sound they make means it's a dream kit for the studio. But it's also a great live kit too, with that inherent tone control making life easier for live engineers."

What was your vision behind designing this 21st Anniversary kit?
"As Jalapeno drums are made from layers of 3-ply plywood laminated together, I figured that I could use 7 layers to make 21-ply drums. I also had one piece of 21-year-old wood lying around the workshop, which just happened to be 21cm deep, so I figured I'd make an anniversary snare. But then thought, why not make a 21-ply kit?"

How did you arrive at the unusually shallow 13" for the bass drum depth?
"I knew I'd like to make a 24" bass, but didn't know what depth to make it. So I did an online poll of whether it should be 12" or 14" deep (being the two current depth trends). The results were a draw, so I figured I should make it 13" instead!"

"THEY ALMOST SOUND PRE-EQ'D, **WITH A STRONG FUNDAMENTAL PITCH,** LITTLE IN THE WAY OF BRIGHT OVERTONES **AND A REAL SENSE OF POWERFUL BODY IN THEIR TONE.**"

1 2

3

4

1. Vintage deep wooden hoops with black chrome claws give this a classic vibe.
2. Massive 24" diameter paired with the shallow 13" depth gives this bass drum a defined tone and punch.
3. All drums are made from 21-ply Finnish birch, giving a focused tone.
4. Unique matte finish with a smoke-fade effect gives this an understated, classy look.
5. The tom overtones and resonance are so controlled, there was little need for dampening gel, even under the scrutiny of mics in the studio.
6. Coated heads seem to be a great sonic pairing for these thick-shelled beech toms.
7. The wooden hoop on the snare produces a beautifully rich and microphone-friendly cross-stick sound.

5

6 7

When one sees a bass drum of those dimensions, it's hard not to start thinking about Led Zeppelin grooves. With the red light on, I fire up my best Bonzo impression while cranking out the legendary grooves to 'Fool in the Rain' and 'When The Levee Breaks'. There is a real blend between the toms and bass drum, they feel part of the same family. This isn't always the case with some drum kits, with the toms almost feeling quite detached from the bass drum sound. These three beauties sing together. The 11mm 21-ply birch shells really seem in their natural environment in the studio. The Finnish birch provides decent low-end punch with the high frequencies attenuated by those large-mass wooden hoops, while the thick shells give a focussed rich tone, without masses of sustain. One small piece of dampening gel on the 16"x16" floor tom is all that is needed to tame this instrument under the close scrutiny of the microphones. That is quite something on a floor tom of that size, which underlines the impact all those plies and the thickness of the shell is having in controlling sustain. The 13"x9" rack tom, featuring a suspension mount design hugging the single, full-length tuning lugs, oozes a lush, vintage warmth coupled with decent attack and a real sense of 'give' under the stick. This all adds to the desire to play grooves with less note density and wide-open fill phrases on this instrument. Using coated heads seem to be a perfect choice for these drums.

"THIS KIT FELT **VERY MUCH AT HOME IN A STUDIO ENVIRONMENT AND SOUNDED GREAT UNDER MICROPHONES.**"

Having experienced how the drums respond to a medium tuning, the next step is to go low, resulting in a pronounced change in tone. The toms seem to sing even more now and have greater aggression to them, while the bass drum loses some of the sense of defined pitch and becomes more concerned with attack. Tuning these drums higher doesn't seem to be what they want to do – literally, in fact. The tuning rods are fairly stiff and make tuning higher quite a challenge. I'm not sure whether this is a lubrication issue or a feature of the tuning rod design, but either way, this makes for a limited tuning range.

The snare drum was also decidedly focussed and mellow with the wooden hoops producing a beautifully clear cross-stick tone. For me, this drum didn't feel as much part of the family as the toms and bass drum. Cranked up, the drum produced some punch and cut, which contrasts against lower tuning with masses of dampening gel, suiting a more swampy, Americana vibe. Patience is needed tuning this drum to find sweet spots which suit it for different musical situations, and with the low volume, that suggests this drum is more suited to a recording environment. Clearly, this set of drums comes with a serious price tag which may be out of reach for many, but you are paying for the custom shop design and build of such a unique instrument.

CONTACT
www.jalapenodrums.co.uk
Tel. 01524 63577

Verdict

These are unique, hand-made drums with plenty of character. The rich, warm and focused tones would suit classic rock vibes, ideally suited to a studio environment.

Rhythm Rating

8/10

SJC Pathfinder Series

SJC's new Pathfinder Series shell pack offers excellent bang for your buck

Words: **Matt Fisher**

PRICES:
3-piece shell pack £659
14"x6½" snare drum £194

Scott James Ciprari founded SJC with his brother Mike in 2000. As a teenager, Scott had started making drum kits in his grandmother's basement in Massachusetts as a hobby. Twenty years on, SJC now has an impressive roster of artists such as Tré Cool (Green Day), Jay Weinberg (Slipknot) and Josh Dun (Twenty One Pilots), with the company continuing to grow steadily.

The newly revamped Pathfinder Series kit is the latest offering from SJC and comes in two different finishes – Miami Teal Satin or Black Satin. We were sent the former and must say the look of the kit is absolutely stunning. The finish grain is visible all along the shell which gives it a rather distinctive look with the contrasting flat black rims and hardware. The eye-catching SJC badge also adds to the stylish look of these drums.

The kit comes as a 3-piece shell pack with just a tom mount and bracket. The sizes are 22"x18" bass drum, 12"x8" high tom and 14"x16" floor tom. We were also supplied with a 14"x6½" Pathfinder Black Satin snare drum.

The Taiwanese-made shells are 7-ply blended maple/mahogany which feature 1.3mm triple flanged hoops – encouraging an open and long sustain so that the tone projects and cuts through. The shells feature the aesthetically pleasing SJC shield lugs, offering better tuning stability and adjustability than tube lugs. The 12"x8" tom is mounted on the supplied mount, making it easy and convenient to position. The lugs and hoops are painted flat black which gives the drums a striking look.

The Pathfinder snare drum is an equally pleasing design. Featuring the same maple and mahogany shell as the bass drum and toms, the only difference here is the use of an inverse colour scheme – the teal logo against the black finish really stands out and provides a stunning look to the kit overall.

The Sound

The kit assembled, we manage to get a pleasing sound very early on using the factory heads and tuning the drums pretty low. With a pro-grade shell recipe and new modern rock sizing, the Pathfinder delivers a warmth, bite, and sustain suited for all types of modern rock music.

"WITH A PRO-GRADE SHELL RECIPE AND NEW MODERN ROCK SIZING, THE PATHFINDER DELIVERS A WARMTH BITE AND SUSTAIN SUITED FOR ALL TYPES OF MODERN ROCK MUSIC."

With the 12"x8" high tom tuned relatively slack, the drum produces a big and full low-end tone that would sound amazing in a rock or metal situation. The 14"x16" floor tom is a highly resonant drum that has luscious overtones when struck. Again with the heads tuned down, the sound produced is big and booming with the tone being well balanced between both toms. On the flip side, these drums are far from subtle and as a result, are best suited to rock – lacking the versatility to be used in a range of genres.

Of the overall sound that the Pathfinder kit delivers, we were most impressed with the bass drum. Tuned down the sound is full and fat; tuned medium there is more punch and attack. Either way, the bass drum has a lot of depth to it. The resonant head is not pre-ported but the front factory head has an inside ring which muffles some of the sound.

The accompanying snare drum sounds great tuned medium to high, possessing a weighty tone. I tend to favour deep snares and this one certainly delivers a responsive and powerful sound. The combination of the powerful sound from the bass, snare and toms makes this an ideal kit for the gigging or recording rock drummer.

CONTACT
www.sjcdrums.com

Verdict

A quality intermediate-and-upwards level drum kit that won't break the bank. Ideal for the aspiring rock drummer (or even a more experienced one) looking for an eye-catching and affordable setup.

Rhythm Rating

7/10

1. Miami Teal Satin finish grain is visible all along the shell which gives it a rather distinctive look.
2. The 7-ply blended maple/mahogany shells deliver a full and sustained sound.
3. The 12"x8" tom is mounted on the supplied mount which makes it easy and convenient to position.
4. The 1.3mm triple-flanged steel hoops encourage an open and long sustain so that the tone projects and cuts through.
5. The shells feature the aesthetically pleasing SJC shield lugs, offering better tuning stability and adjustability than tube lugs.
6. The black finish and teal logo on the snare provides stunning aesthetics.

Evans UV2 Coated Heads

Evans' new ultraviolet coated heads get the double-ply treatment

Words: **Tom Bradley**

PRICE: From £21.90

In 2016 Evans released the UV1, boasting not only a newly designed, hard-wearing film but also a special ultraviolet-cured coating from which the heads take their name. Following the success of the line, the UV1 range has since been expanded to include bass drum heads and now we see the introduction of a double-ply snare and tom batter which uses the same technology.

The UV2 heads are constructed using two plies of clear 7mm film which are treated to a thin white coating – screen printed and then cured under UV lamps. This unique process is designed to create a hard-wearing surface with a coating that doesn't wear or chip under prolonged playing.

Available sizes at launch include 8", 10", 12", 13", 14", 15", 16" and 18". Fusion, rock and standard configuration tom packs are also offered. For review, we're starting with the SJC Pathfinder kit which has a 14" snare, 12" rack and 16" floor tom. When fitted to the kit we notice that, like the UV1s, the coating doesn't run all the way out to the hoop but instead leaves a clear border around the edge. We're not sure if this has any kind of tonal impact but it's an interesting touch aesthetically as it leaves the bearing edges of the shell on full display.

1. The UV2 is a double-ply version of the popular UV1 head. Each one uses two layers of hardwearing 7mm film.

2. The UV name is taken from the unique ultraviolet curing process which creates a longer-lasting coating.

3. The screen printed and cured coating doesn't run all the way to the rim which leaves the drum's bearing edges on display.

These snare and tom batter heads are available in 8", 10", 12", 13", 14", 15", 16" and 18" sizes.

At low tensions, the heads offer a real depth of low-end and are in fact surprisingly dry. There seems much less need for dampening, particularly on the floor tom. Both toms tune to deliciously tubby notes really quickly and the improvement from the stock heads to the UV2s is significant. On the snare drum, the head shows off a wider tuning range and more complex frequencies at higher tension.

Over to a smaller 10", 12" and 14" tom configuration with another kit, the difference from Evans' standard G2 to the UV2 was relatively subtle. Still detectable though, the distinction was a deeper bass response with a slightly shorter decay. The thump they offer on initial contact is rather addictive.

It's worth mentioning that after withstanding a hard-hitting studio session and several gigs, the UV2s are in more-or-less pristine condition save for a couple of minor scuffs.

CONTACT

www.daddario.com

Verdict

Despite a fair tuning range, the UV2s are in their element in low to medium tunings. A must-try for rock and metal players, these hardwearing heads are easy to tune and sound fantastic.

Rhythm Rating

8/10

HW3 ADVANCED LIGHTWEIGHT HARDWARE SET

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De Broize Custom Drums Walnut Collection Snare Drums

With this handsome trio of walnut drums, De Broize continues its mission to give salvaged hardwoods a new lease of life

Words: **Geoff Nicholls**

PRICE: £499

Samuel de Broize-Ward is a London-based drummer who has been building drums since 2016 and has already won many high profile fans. He was inspired to try his hand following the passing of his grandfather, a woodworking enthusiast. Inheriting his grandad's tools he set out to make drums using recycled materials.

In this, he follows a similar ideal to Provenance of Essex, whose drums have featured regularly in Rhythm. While Tim Broughton of Provenance has made metal and wood shells, Sam focuses on solid wood like oak, beech and sycamore, largely rescued from obsolete furniture. In the present case, he's salvaged a solid walnut dining table top from the 1980s and turned it into half a dozen drums.

Since it's impractical for a home-builder to slice solid timber into plies, the most viable option is stave construction. De Broize has been honest in explaining that the trial and error journey of learning how to do this has not been easy. But with only three years under his belt, he has made dramatic progress.

Thus for review, we have three 14" diameter snares of varying depths. The 5½" is 15mm thick, the 6" is 18mm and the 6½" is 16mm. Sam reveals that "I didn't have a set thickness in mind. I usually concentrate on each drum individually. With stave snares, I've been comfortable carving between 12 and 18mm. It provides strength and mass without compromising on resonance."

Sam goes on to explain that for 10-lug shells he uses 20 staves, allowing for placement of the tube lugs on every other stave, thereby minimising any interference with resonance. The shells are the stars of the show and the dense black walnut is clearly of the highest quality. Each drum has a distinctive, unrepeatable grain pattern and the finish – Danish oil followed by a waxed stain – is sumptuous. The insides look as good as the outsides.

A standard 45-degree inner bearing edge cut leads up to a sharp, perfectly level peak. Then there's an enlarged round-over to the outside. On the resonant side, the snare beds entail a shallow flattening of the sharp bottom edge.

With recycled wood there's always the chance of a blemish, and the middle, 6" deep drum has three tiny hinge screw holes. Sam could easily have filled and hidden these, but he's opted to leave them. The two other drums are blemish-free. Customers may have mixed feelings about such imperfections, but I'm inclined to the view that they emphasise the heritage and unique identity of these drums. They certainly make no difference to the drum's integrity or sound.

Sam reveals that the UK produces four million tonnes of waste timber annually, of which only half is recycled. De Broize is firmly in the green half. Check the website for several eco-initiatives slated for 2020.

Into action

Clean is the first adjective that jumps out after just a few strokes. Such a thick and dense shell does lead to a rather controlled and bright sound. There's that slight slappy boxiness (in a good way) that you get with thick shell drums, where – more so than with a thin ply shell, say – the character of the head is prominent. Thus actual head choice has added significance – and the CS Remo batters work well here. Striking a rim shot there's a pure high ping, but even without any damping, it does not sustain overly long.

The accuracy of the bearing edges adds to this focused air. There's a larger round-over than on most modern drums, which cushions the impact a little. Yet this is balanced by the sharp peaks of the bearing edges which ensure pinpoint definition when playing right up to the rim.

This is particularly noticeable when playing softly – and all three drums are dynamically sensitive. Each has a wide tuning span, so all three drums will cope with a diverse range of musical styles. Tuning the shallow drum low, or the deepest drum high (and vice versa) illustrates the trio's flexibility, the shells being so well crafted they take it readily

"THE SHELLS ARE **THE STARS OF THE SHOW** AND THE DENSE BLACK WALNUT **IS CLEARLY OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY.** EACH DRUM HAS A **DISTINCTIVE, UNREPEATABLE GRAIN PATTERN.**"

without choking.

As for the shell thicknesses, a millimetre or two difference means no discernible difference in sound outside of the sphere of microphysics. The real variation is in the three depths where you clearly hear the range in fundamental pitch/timbre. Pushed for a favourite I plump for the 5½" as its inherent toppiness combines beautifully with the poppy, lively tone.

Changing heads is a long task as the smooth but stiff screws take forever. A drop of lug lube or similar helps. Accuracy of construction is paramount with directly-tapped tube lugs, and the good news is that they've all been super-accurately aligned. Another pointer to Sam's fastidious workmanship.

CONTACT
www.debroizecustom.com

Verdict

Sam de Broize can be proud of this unique collection of British hand-built snares. With their fine stave walnut shells, they not only sound great but make excellent use of reclaimed timber.

Rhythm Rating

8/10

1. **Gorgeous woody exterior.** Each drum has a 20-panel vertical stave construction. The walnut shells have a Danish oil and waxed stain finish.
2. **Generic chrome hardware.** The strainer is a familiar generic model with a straightforward, reliable action.
3. **Superb bearing edges.** Bearing edges are 45 degrees with an enlarged round-over for a distinctive look.
4. **Handsome badge.** It reads: "De Broize Custom Drums, Established 2016, Handcrafted in Great Britain."
5. **Green credentials.** Each of the three drums is unique. They are hewn from a salvaged 1980s solid walnut tabletop.
6. **Air vent holes.** Each drum has two vent holes, one concealed under the strainer and one by the badge plate.

Vulcan Dark Master Cymbals

Italian artistry meets Turkish craftsmanship in an exciting new addition to the cymbal world

Words: **Adam Jones**

PRICES:
from £199

Launched in the UK in the final months of 2019, Vulcan is an all-new entry to the cymbal market. Landing as a full-formed brand, Vulcan has already acquired Brit sticksmen Rob Brian and Mel Gaynor as endorsees and is distributed in Britain by PMT, a retail chain with stores dotted around the UK. Vulcan boasts no fewer than twelve distinctive cymbal ranges. This selection sent to Rhythm is from the company's Dark Master Series.

Vulcan (the god of fire and metalworking in Roman mythology, usually depicted wielding a blacksmith's hammer) was founded by Italian cymbalsmith Massimiliano Arrigoni. Max's family business is a long-established instrument manufacturer and distributor in Italy. For over a decade Max was closely involved with Bosphorus cymbals as a distributor and agent. During this time he gained experience in traditional Turkish cymbal production methods and also worked with chemical engineering companies to understand the subtle differences in bronze alloys. Most notably, he consulted with Antonio Di Lorenzo, a close associate of the legendary Roberto Spizzichino, considered by many to be the world's finest cymbalsmith until his death in 2011.

This detail-deep background and extensive planning explains how Vulcan Cymbals has emerged with a comprehensive set of ranges rather than building from small beginnings. It also gives an insight into the distinctive Italian/Turkish axis at the heart of the company's products: the cymbals are conceived and developed by Massimiliano in Italy while production models emerge from a factory in Turkey. This cross-border birthing is further alluded to in the legend stamped onto each cymbal above the Vulcan logo: "Designed in Italy / Made in Turkey".

1. Dual national
Vulcan cymbals are unique in being designed in Italy and then manufactured in Turkey.

2. Diverse dozen
Dark Master is one of twelve different cymbal ranges offered by Vulcan.

3. Unique recipe
Vulcan has developed its own distinctive bronze alloys.

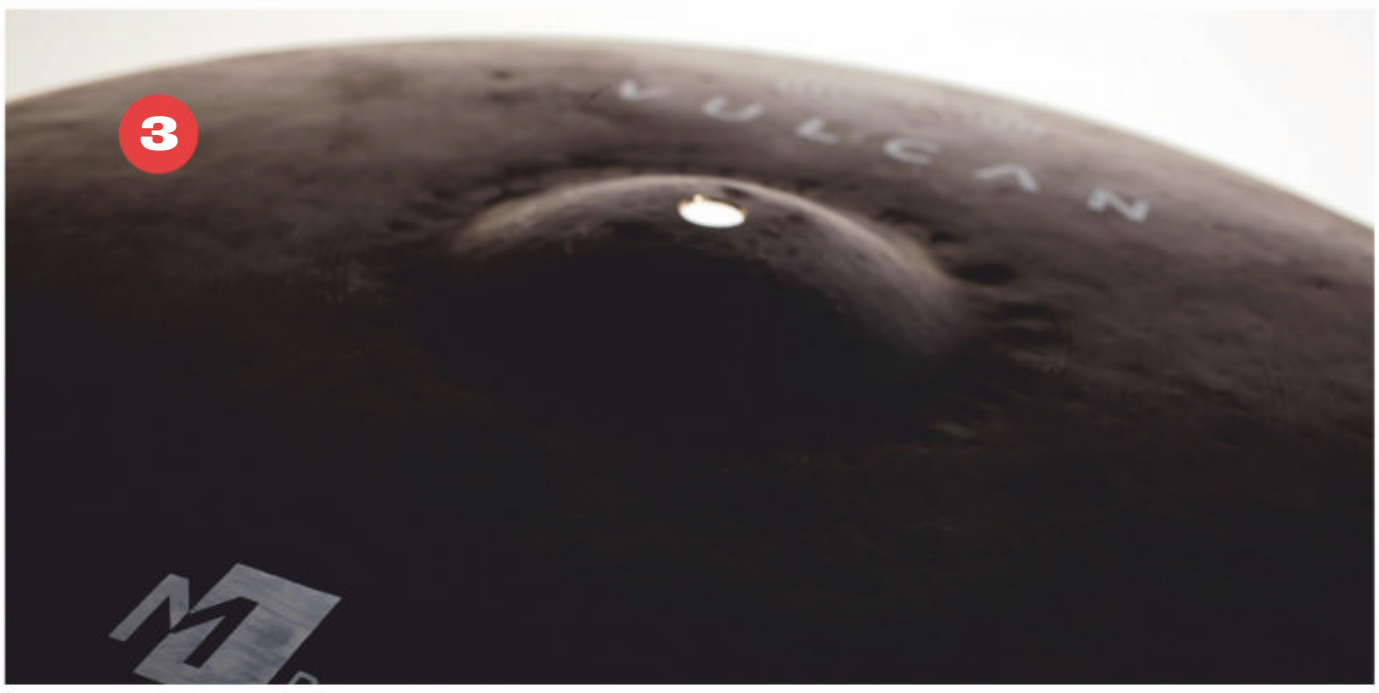
4. Dark secret
The black 'coating' is a special chemical process which helps imbue the cymbals with their tonal qualities.

5. Hand to hand
These sort of hammering patterns are not the work of machines.

6. Tailor-made
Other diameters are available and custom orders can be turned around in six to eight weeks.

Vulcan describes Dark Master cymbals as being "born for jazz but great for every style". Heavily hammered, light for their diameters and rocking a distinctively black look, first impressions would certainly point in a more niche direction. Each cymbal is individually cast from a secret B20 bronze formula (all Vulcan will reveal is that it is a "slight variance" to the standard B20 recipe) and then hand worked. Plentiful hammer marks cover the entire surface of each cymbal, with specific areas bearing clusters of particularly deep craters. The black coating which extends to a few millimetres from the edge is not a coating at all, but a proprietary chemical process – the details of which Vulcan is understandably reluctant to reveal. Vulcan also claims that light lathing has been undertaken as well, but it's hard to discern beneath the combination of blackness and hammering. Each cymbal has its weight in grams and the cymbalsmith's initials added in permanent ink beneath the bell.

On review are a pair of 14" hi-hats, 16" and 18" crashes and a 22" ride. The 14" hats are paired in good proportions at 873g on top and 1035g below. They're deliciously warm with a gentle but crisp top end partnered by a rich and organic body. Some sparsely lathed cymbals can sound



a little one dimensional but the depth of note found in these hats can be measured in fathoms. All of the available frequencies seem to be represented equally, making the hats a joy to play into – they're sniper-accurate at low dynamics, yet when the sticks are raining down in anger the underlying mellowness still carries through. Loosening off the pedal releases an irresistible sloshiness to further colour the sound while stepping results in a dryish, almost respectful *chick*.

The two crashes weigh in at 935g and 1104g respectively. For these dimensions, that's pretty skinny and both cymbals flex willingly in the hands. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they both open quickly when asked. A similar blend of assertive high frequencies leads the way, closely followed by a more substantial main note that enables them to cut through quite assertively without sounding thin or brash. The 16" model balances the opening toppiness with equal amounts of warmth and darkness that then resolves into a sweet decay. There is just enough complexity present to embellish the sound without impinging on the harmonious whole. If the 16" is relatively deeply-voiced for its waistline, the 18" possesses a near-perfect combination of pitch, darkness and depth, all spiced with delicate trashiness. The stick sound – a clearly enunciated *tah* – is also genuinely useable, making it good for low volume riding duties

The 22" ride (2120g) lends these same tonal qualities to its larger diameter but behaves more like a crash/ride. While the stick sound is warm and clear, the level of wash that is generated at anything above low to medium dynamics soon rises from the background to be something of a distraction. Some judiciously applied tape would be enough to rein in its enthusiasm as it's a great sounding cymbal, just a little eager to show off its qualities all at once. By the same token, it could be used as a fabulously endowed crash.

"THEY'RE SNIPER-ACCURATE AT LOW DYNAMICS, YET WHEN THE STICKS ARE RAINING DOWN IN ANGER THE UNDERLYING MELLOWNESS STILL CARRIES THROUGH."

CONTACT
www.vulcancymbals.com/en/
www.pmtonline.co.uk

Verdict

On this evidence, there is now a serious new contender amongst the established cymbal brands. These cymbals are as good – if not better in some aspects – than anything else out there and are keenly priced; check them out.

Rhythm Rating

8/10

Rhythm

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Beats working

Every drummer needs Rhythm. Exclusive lessons from our expert team...

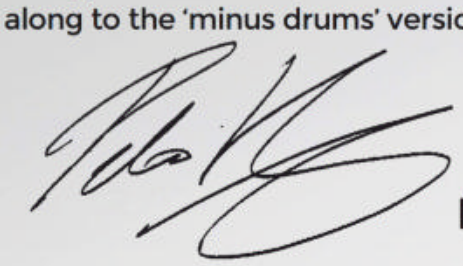
Welcome to Beats Working where the familiar trio of Colin Woolway, Erik Stams and I are spending this issue exploring the world of odd time signatures in 'Getting Started', 'Creative Concepts' and 'Technical Difficulties', respectively. Here we'll be taking you from mastering your first odd time grooves in 5/8, 7/8, and 9/8 through to challenging two-bar Vinnie Colaiuta-inspired examples.

Next in 'Four-Piece Fills' Jason Bowld explores another intense sounding fill concept, this time breaking up single-strokes between the hands and feet, while in 'Percussion Toolbox' all-round percussion guru Pete Lockett turns his attention to the humble shaker, with some essential patterns that can be used to add sparkle and life to any drum track.

In 'So, You Want To Play Hybrid' Tom Bradley turns his attention to using triggers on the bass drum while in another of his 'drum lesson without picking up the sticks' Mike Sturgis looks at the current trend for drummers to develop a portfolio career.

And finally our play-along tracks include The Knack classic 'My Sharona' and The Killers' 'Mr Brightside'. Here you'll find both pieces broken down, with key elements demonstrated, ready for you to play along to the 'minus drums' version of the tracks.

Enjoy!



Pete Riley, Beats Working Editor

Introducing our expert tutors (and the best drumming advice they've been given).

PETE RILEY

In his 35 years of playing Pete has recorded and toured with a wide range of artists from Guthrie Govan to Keith Emerson (ELP). He's also been active in the world of education for many years, started writing for Rhythm in '93, has been teaching at ACM for some 21 years and more recently at WaterBear in Brighton.

BEST PIECE OF DRUMMING ADVICE I'VE BEEN GIVEN:
"Steve Smith stressed the importance of practising new ideas slowly and quietly. This can highlight any technical issues by requiring all of the movements to be deliberate and controlled."

ERIK STAMS

Born and raised in NYC, Erik has over 20 years of performing, recording, television, film and teaching experience. He's performed and recorded with artists including Jamie Lawson, Zervas and Pepper, Butch Thomas, Jon Langford, The Glyndebourne Touring Opera, and The Darling Buds. He is head of drums at BIMM London.

BEST PIECE OF DRUMMING ADVICE I'VE BEEN GIVEN:
"I've got three. 'Don't eat fried chicken before you play' (greasy fingers!) – Walter Garces. 'Play deeper time' – Justin DiCioccio. 'Stop listening to yourself and start listening to the rest of the band' – my good friend Sid."

JASON BOWLD

Jase has been the drummer for Welsh rock/metal titans Bullet for my Valentine since 2015. He began drumming aged 12 and turned professional at 21. He joined UK industrial legends Pitchshifter from 1999 to 2007, during which time his session drumming career took shape. He's played with Killing Joke, Pop Will Eat Itself, Fightstar, and even Bill Bailey.

BEST PIECE OF DRUMMING ADVICE I'VE BEEN GIVEN:
"Just remember – fortune favours the brave. Don't let doubt creep into your head, don't over analyse, just go for it and grab opportunities by the throat because you never know if they'll come around again."

PETE LOCKETT

Pete is one of the most versatile multi-percussionists on the planet and has played a dizzying range of instruments with artists including Björk, Peter Gabriel, Robert Plant, Michael Nyman, and the Pet Shop Boys; and on a plethora of Hollywood films. He continues to tour worldwide as a soloist, collaborator and educator.

BEST PIECE OF DRUMMING ADVICE I'VE BEEN GIVEN:
"Roughly 30 years ago I was lucky enough to do a tour with the blues legend, Lowell Fulson. I was nervous in the soundcheck and he could tell. He just turned round and very gently said 'Breathe and relax with the music'. It was a game changer for me..."

Image: Jim Dyson/Getty Images

MIKE STURGIS

A 15-year veteran of writing for Rhythm magazine, Mike Sturgis has appeared live and on record with artists including A-ha, Steve Winwood, Jack Bruce, David Bowie, Elton John, Tom Jones, Bob James, Asia, Beverly Knight and many more. He plays with Redtenbacher's Funkestra and The Staks and is head of education for DIME Online.

BEST PIECE OF DRUMMING ADVICE I'VE BEEN GIVEN:
"The best drumming advice I've been given (via a multitude of sources) is that timekeeping is fundamental to everything. Keep battling the Russian dragon; i.e. no rushing or dragging!"

COLIN WOOLWAY

Colin has been playing and teaching drums professionally since 1976. He has done every kind of gig including eight years with rock icon Suzi Quatro. He is the founder of the Drumsense teaching programme and has written for Rhythm for over 20 years! Colin teaches at studios in Twickenham, The Brit School, and ELAM.

BEST PIECE OF DRUMMING ADVICE I'VE BEEN GIVEN:
"Not so much a piece of aural advice, but in 1978 when Bob Armstrong showed me how to hold a drumstick properly, and subsequently how to hit a drum, it changed everything for me!"

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For the featured tuition videos go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Getting Started

There's nothing unusual about odd time if you know what you're playing, says **Colin Woolway**

Playing in 4/4 time is so common as to be known as "common time". So is everything else "odd time"? Well, the second most popular time signature is probably 3/4, or "waltz time", and that has an odd number of beats, but I think what most people mean by "odd time" is counting in 5, 7, and 9 and then on to counting in 11, 13, 15 etc. So today we are looking at the most common of the odd times, and how to get started. The simplest approach is to break the counting up into manageable subdivisions, so in Example 1 we see a count of 5, broken into 3 and 2. Count '12312' and feel the emphasis on the number '1' as you play.

Heads up

The bottom number of the time signature refers to the type of notes we are counting. In these examples, we are counting the eighth notes on the hi-hat, so "5/8" means we are counting five eighth notes per bar.

Then Example 2 has a count of 7; break this into a 4 and a 3 and count as you play.

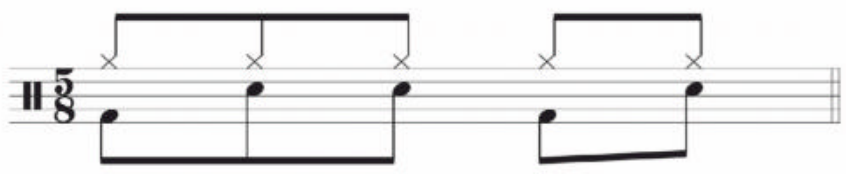
Example 3 is a count of 9, so we're going to think of that as 4 and 5, and we know we can divide the 5 into 3 and 2, so that gives us subdivisions of 432 which is a useful way for getting our heads around what is quite a long odd count!

Remember to emphasise the '1' of each count, played on the bass drum; before long you will start to feel the rhythm of the count, which will set you up for the next phase, which is NOT to count!

Finally, our practice challenge is to play groove and fill in 9/8 time; count 4 and 3 but play a short improvised fill over the '2' count. Check the video footage for my examples!

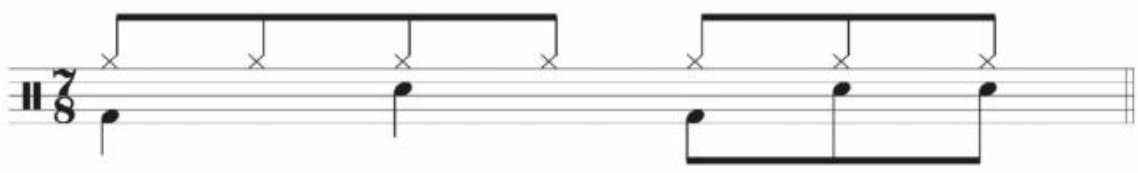
For Colin's video lesson go to www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

1



Example 1 – 5/8 time; count subdivisions of 3 and 2, with the bass drum on the '1' of each count.

2



Example 2 – 7/8 time; count subdivisions of 4 and 3, with the bass drum on the '1' of each count.

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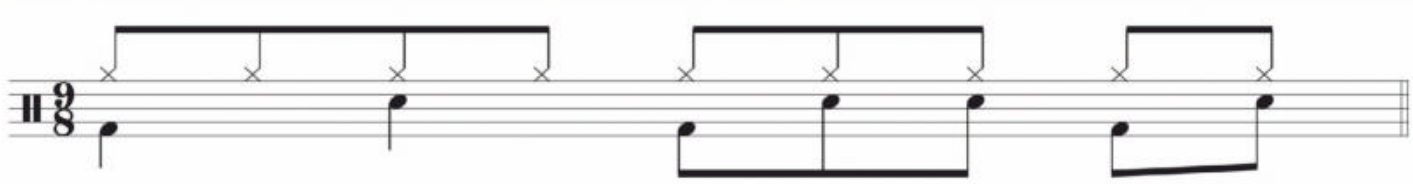
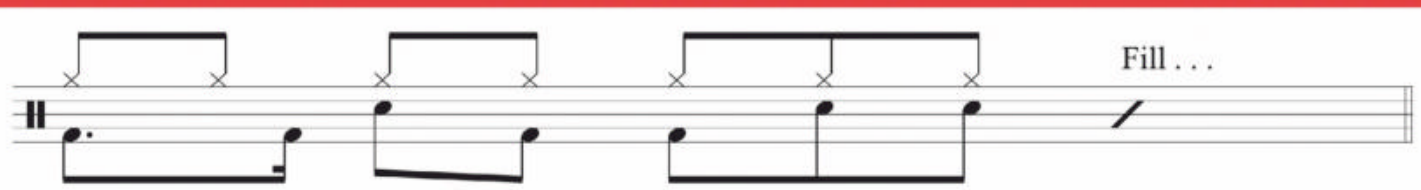


Example 3 – 9/8 time; count 4, 3 and 2, lean on the bass drum on the first of each count and you will start to feel a groove!

4



Example 4 – try playing a short fill over the '2' count at the end of the 9/8 bar.

Creative Concepts

Make odd time signatures feel natural in 5/8. **Erik Stams** shows you how...

Odd time signatures can be made to feel natural. This month we'll focus on 5/8.

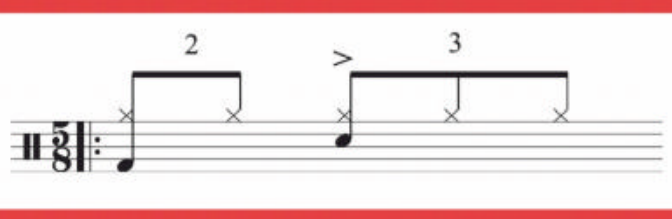
'Take Five' by Dave Brubeck and 'My Wave' by Soundgarden are examples of grooves in 5/4 or 5/8. These numbers represent a time signature which appears at the start of a piece of music. Think of it as a rhythmic framework. A time signature tells us how to count the music. It does not tell us what to play or how loud or how fast to play. In this case, the top number tells us to count to five. The bottom number tells us the rhythmic value of each count or beat (quarter notes/eighth notes...). So, 5/8 can be thought of as five eighth notes per bar.

As the number five cannot be divided in half using whole numbers, we wind up with music that is broken into a series of twos and threes (1-2, 1-2-3). Example 1 shows this, with the bass drum on '1' and the snare drum on '3'. The additional bass drum note in Example 2 creates a twisted shuffle feel. A syncopated bass drum note on the 'three' side of the rhythm creates a more balanced sounding groove (3). This can also be orchestrated on the snare drum (4). Example 5 uses a five-note 16th note sticking pattern (RLRRL) to create a busier groove. Remove ghost notes to create a broken sounding groove (6). Examples 7-10 show the same process, but the groove is divided into three and then two (1-2-3, 1-2).

For Erik's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

The time signature specifies how many beats (pulses) are contained in each measure (bar), and which note value is equivalent to a beat.

1



Simple 5/8 groove with bass drum on '1' and the snare drum on '3'.

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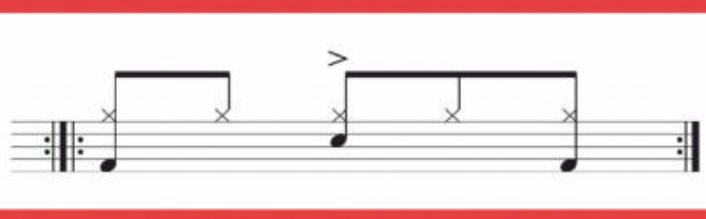
This additional bass drum note creates a twisted sounding shuffle.

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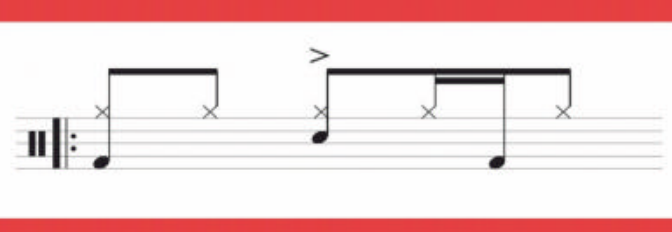
Add a syncopated bass drum note to the 'three' side of the groove.

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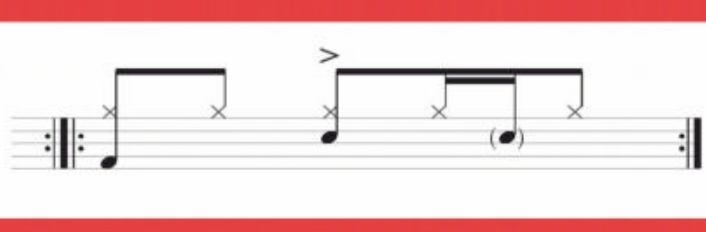
Add a syncopated snare drum note to the 'three' side of the groove.

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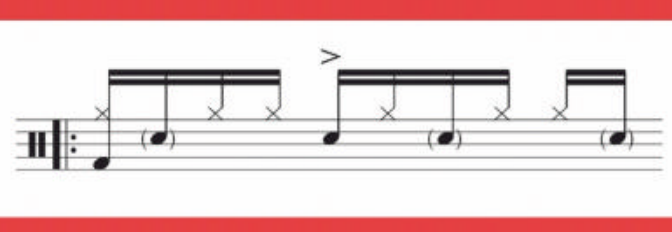
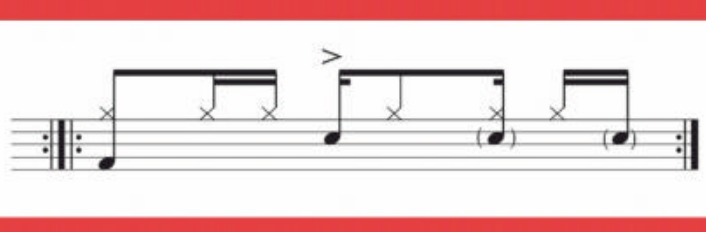


RLRRL sticking with backbeat on '3'.

6



Remove some ghost notes.

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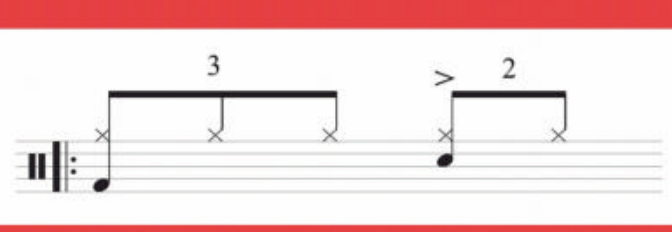

Simple 5/8 groove with bass drum on '1' and the snare drum on '4'.

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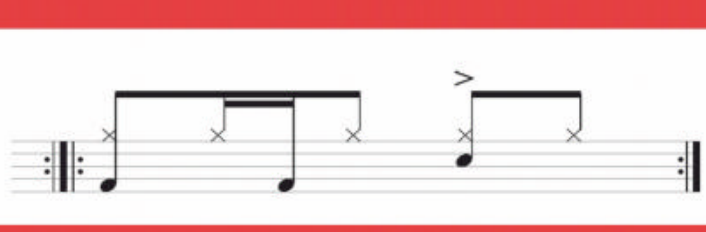
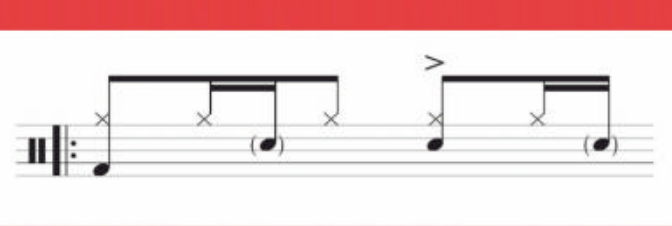
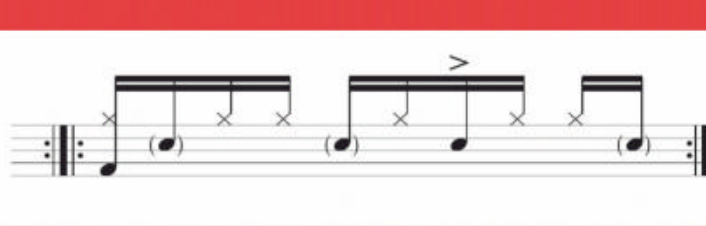

Add a syncopated bass drum note to the 'three' side of the groove.

9



Add a syncopated snare drum note to the 'three' side of the groove.

10



RLRRL sticking with backbeat on '4'.

Technical Difficulties

How to make odd times feel less 'odd' with **Pete Riley**

For Pete's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Odd time signatures needn't necessarily sound odd and it's down to the drummer to make any awkwardness palatable. Here we explore two effective solutions to help them feel more comfortable.

We begin with Example 1 which shows a basic groove in 7/8, essentially a familiar 4/4 groove with the final eighth note missing. The result of this 'missing' eighth note is a groove that stumbles into the next bar.

One way to alleviate this is subdividing the last three eighth notes into two dotted eighth notes which essentially means placing the second snare drum note one 16th note earlier. This immediately makes the groove (Example 2) feel funkier and less odd. This approach can be used at the end of any pattern in 5/8, 9/8, 11/8 etc, assuming they're subdivided as 2/3, 2/2/3, 2/2/2/3 (see Erik's column on page 77 for details on this in 5/8).

Example 3 introduces the approach referred to as 'over-riding'. In this case we're accenting the quarter notes in the right hand to create a two-bar pattern. Next, in Example 4, the right hand maintains the same quarter-note emphasis but this time using a broken 16th-note rhythm.

Finally, Examples 5-8 show a variety of kick and snare grooves to be played along with these two right-hand patterns. Once you're comfortable, try filling in ghost notes with the left as well as playing occasional fills. As they extend your vocabulary, these patterns should prove very useful in building four-way coordination too.

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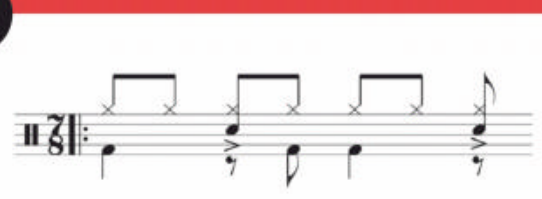
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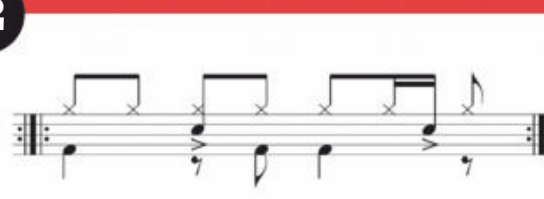
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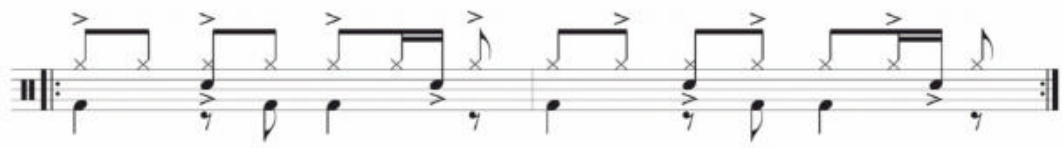
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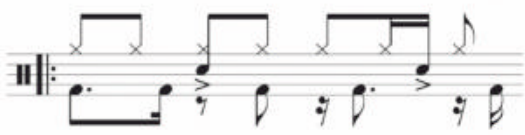
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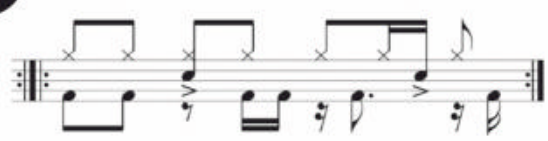

Heads up

Over-riding

During his time with Sting, Vinnie Colaiuta pioneered an approach to odd time signature playing that has become widely known as over-riding. This is where the right hand emphasises another pulse within the pattern to create, for example when emphasising the quarter note, a two-bar pattern.

Four-Piece Fills

Embellish your fills with a blastbeat influence courtesy of **Jason Bowld**

Image: Ryan Chang

For Jason's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

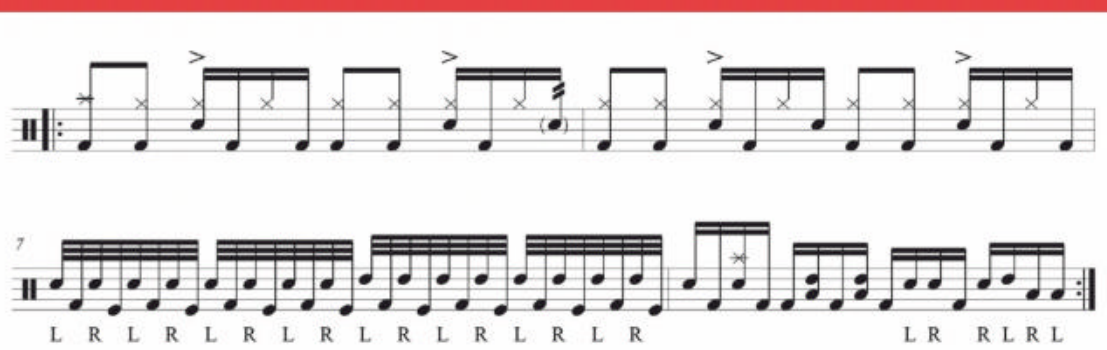
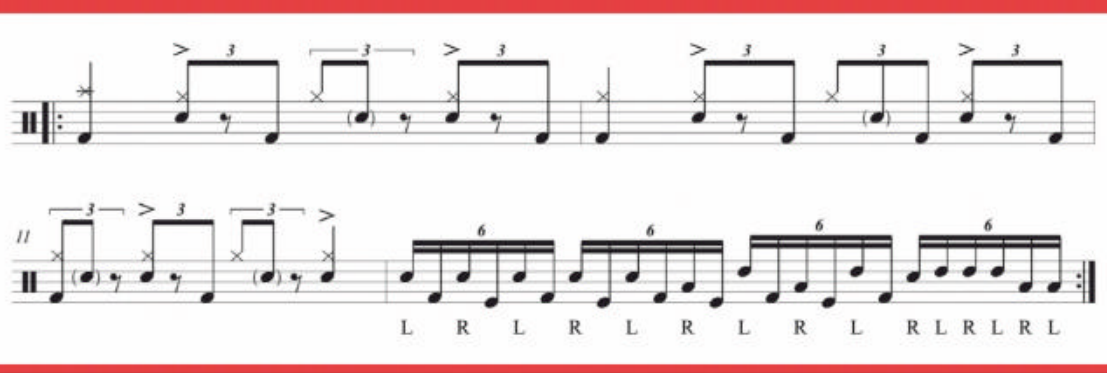
While not breaking the rules of the four-piece setup, you could say I am bending them this month with the inclusion of some double kick (or double pedal!) in the examples. The following fills are not for the faint-hearted and are definitely on the eccentric side. They are effectively blastbeats played within fills but similar techniques have been championed by drummers such as Vinnie Colaiuta and Glen Sobel who are not known for playing death metal! Rather than using one hand and one foot to achieve this 'stutter' effect, we will be playing hand to hand and foot to foot. I choose to lead with my left hand and then the right foot but you may find a different approach easier (see Heads Up) – it's a personal preference. Using all your limbs does makes the effect more powerful though as you will see in Example 1, where a simple groove precedes the fill which is half stutter with a 32nd-note feel, and half contemporary 16ths played on the snare. Example 2 is basically a longer version of Example 1 lasting two bars, while Example 3 is played in 16th-note triplets to add a totally different accompaniment to those swing grooves!

Heads up

Stutter
Other combinations to try with the 'stutter' are; leading with the right hand, then the left foot; left hand, left foot; and right hand, right foot. Each limb alternates once the stutter is started, resulting in what effectively is an interleaved single stroke roll.

1 Playing the short blastbeat or stutter in the fill is very challenging with this limb-to-limb approach. What worked for me was deciding on the most comfortable hand and foot to start with and focusing on the non-dominant limb placement at a slow tempo – it's all about being aware of your weak points and working on them.

Loose hi-hats throughout

2 Once you've mastered Example 1, you can begin to extend the stutter, from the snare to the toms for instance, as in the two bar fill here. The movement to the top tom does make the stutter feel different with regard to balance though, so focusing on keeping your posture straight and strong will help remedy this.

3 The best way of understanding this fill is to go back to the first fill in Example 2 and simply add two extra 16ths on the end of it to create the group of five. Practising to a regular click is important here to place it in the 4/4 context – even though it will sound polyrhythmic at first.

Percussion Toolbox

Don't dismiss the humble shaker, in skilled hands it can glue the music together, says **Pete Lockett**

Indispensible to the percussionist and cohesive for the music, the shaker is often misconceived as an easy and insignificant member of the percussion family. This couldn't be further from the truth. The world over, across many percussion traditions, different forms of shakers are central to the ebb and flow of the groove. They come in many shapes and forms; from woven basket caxixi shakers to maracas, taking in ganzá, shekere, small plastic egg shakers, metal cylinders and what feels like an infinity of other varieties, too many to mention.

Within many cultural traditions the shaker helps define the shape of the rhythm and often acts as a 'bonding' agent among the many different tonal components and instruments. For me, it has often been a first port of call on sessions, especially where the rhythm and timing of some of the music is a little off. It hangs in there and gels it all together, subtly sitting in the mix almost unnoticed. It is this 'unnoticed' quality that gives the illusion that it's easy to do. If this was the case then I would not have needed to replace numerous shaker patterns in the studio, put down by singers and other melody players. Anyway, after these articles, it will hopefully be easy for you.

The shaker we will be looking at is the common or garden cylinder shaker. This is the most common shaker we find in pop and rock and often lays down an even 16th or eighth note flow underneath the music. It can also be a useful addition to the mix for drum set players, providing a great alternative to moving to another cymbal in a verse or chorus. Large shakers can be particularly great in this setting.

In the pictures you will see I am using a double-barrel LP plastic shaker. These have quite thin barrels and give a higher pitch. You can also use any single-barrel shakers of any size. As a rule of thumb, the larger they get then the lower the pitch. Choosing which one works for the music would be different on a case-by-case basis. Basically, turn up on a session with at least ten or more varieties.

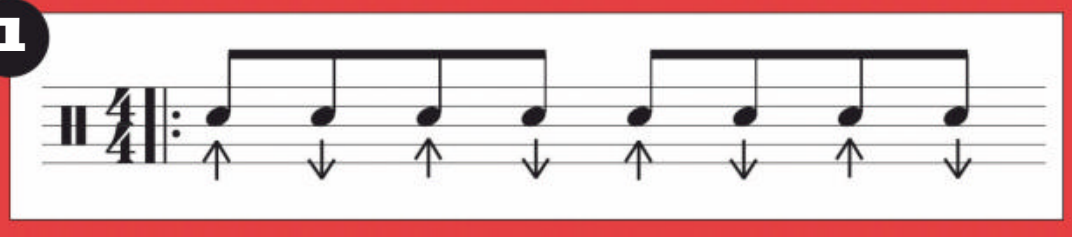
For Pete's video lesson go to
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Holding position

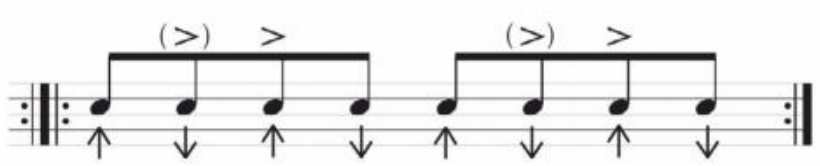
We can see from the picture (right) that the instrument is held horizontally with the thumb behind the shaker and the fingers in front. It is gripped firmly but not too tightly or with any tension. The arm is held out in front of the body in a relaxed manner. The instrument is then played by jolting the cylinder forwards and backwards so the internal beads strike the outer and inner surfaces of the tube, one after the other. The shaker remains horizontal at all times and never dips down on either side to the right or left.

The first action is forwards, or away from you. You will hear the beads strike the outer surface. Then, pull it back in towards your body and you will hear the beads strike on the opposite side. These actions are clearly indicated with arrows on the notation below. We will start with an even flow of eighth notes in the first example. The motion of the arm does not really 'stop' as such with each impact. Rather, there is an even and relaxed flow of the arm backwards and forwards. Actually, it's the internal contents that do most of the work.

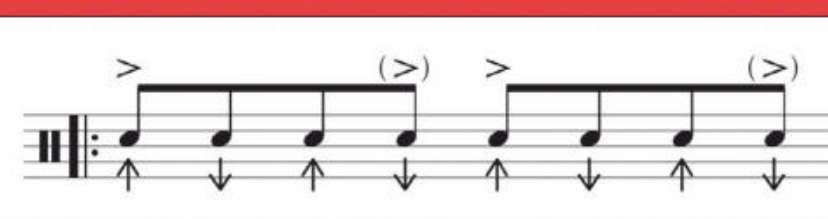
1



In Example 2 we add some simple accents to the pattern on 2 and 4. As with drum sticks, an accent is achieved by the stick coming from a greater height. You pull back a little further on the note before the main accent and then throw a bit harder into the accent itself. We can see that indicated in the score as (>) for the pre- accent throwback and > for the accent itself – without brackets. The throwback accent (>) is not really an accent as such but, because we come back further to prepare for the following accent, then this strike also becomes a little louder.

2

Next we shift the accents to 1 and 3.

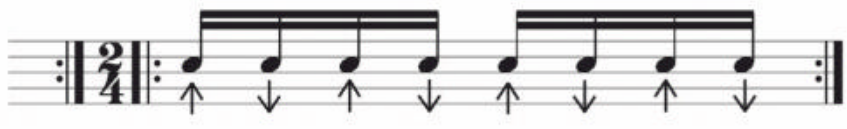
3



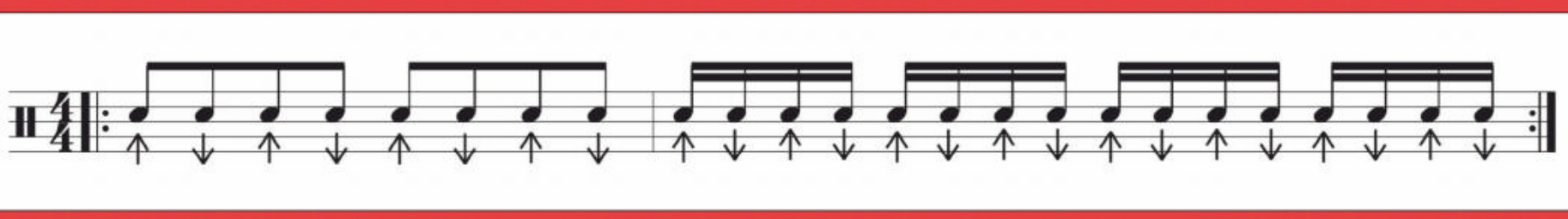
Coming forward for the 'outward' accent.

Image: Drum Festival Switzerland

In Example 4 we switch up to double speed and move to 16th notes, without accents. It is really important to stay relaxed. Do not tense up with this pattern. This becomes really important later on when you have to get through a long track in the studio.

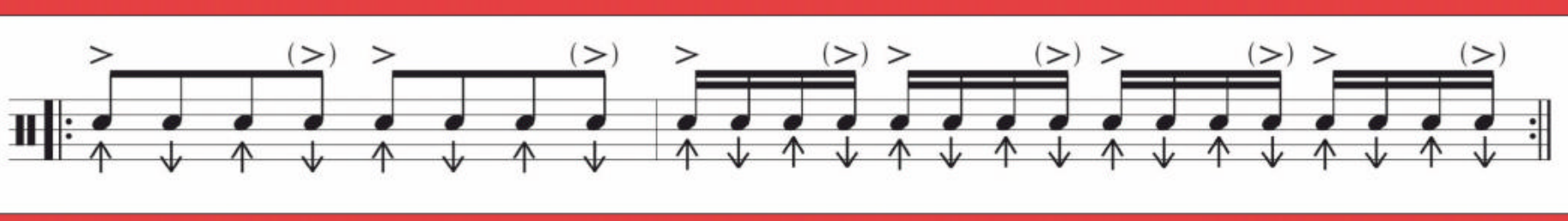
4

Now we can try switching between eighth notes and 16th notes, again, without accents. Focus on making all the individual hits very tight and staccato. This is crucial for effective shaker patterns.

5



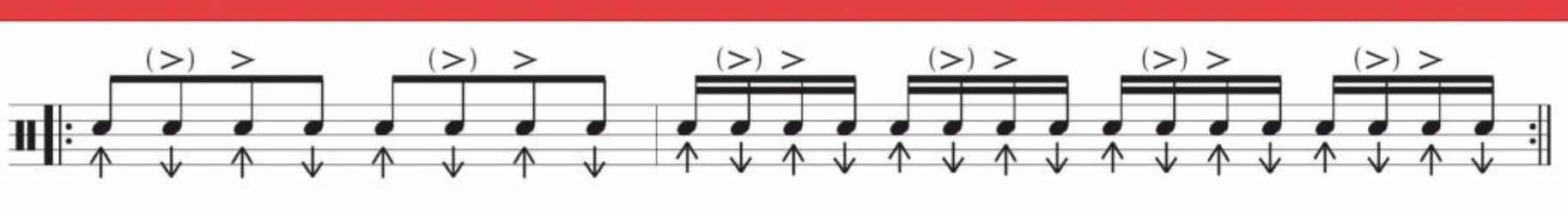
In Example 6 we accent 1 and 3 for the eighth notes and 1, 2, 3 and 4 for the 16th notes. Notice that this is actually an identical pattern at single and double speed.

6



Finally, we switch around and play the accents on the upbeat in both single and double tempos. Choosing where to place the accents is an important factor when putting shakers down on tracks. Also, choosing between single and double speed. You don't hear eighth note shaker patterns that much but, in my experience, this has been one of the most effective uses of the instrument, especially when you then switch into 16ths for a dynamic lift.

7



That's it for now. Time to hit the kitchen blender for a healthy shake!

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So, You Want to Play Hybrid?

Double your module inputs by using splitter cables says **Tom Bradley**

In this session, we will look at expanding our hybrid setup further with the addition of a bass drum trigger. Using triggers in general not only allows us to augment our sound with almost limitless possibilities but can also guarantee tonal consistency from kit to kit or venue to venue. After all, we'll hear the same pre-selected sample whether we choose to trigger a 16" bass drum or a 26".

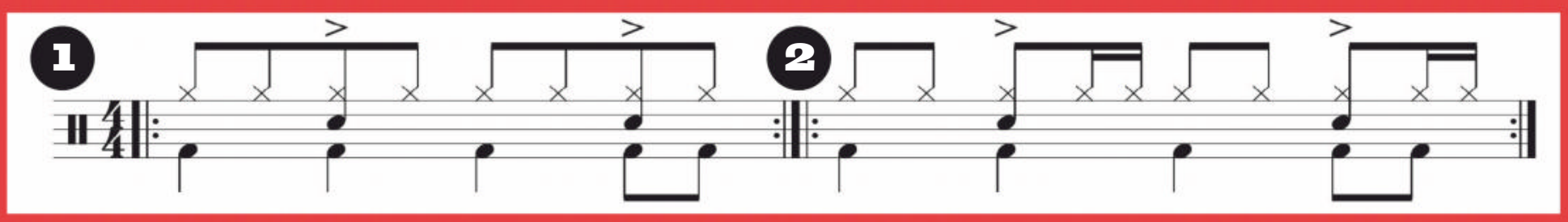
For our tech setup, we'll be keeping the snare trigger from the previous session and adding in our bass drum trigger. The difference here though is we will only be using one input by means of a splitter cable. This method allows us to effectively double the number of module inputs available – particularly helpful for those using smaller units. See the video for more.

In the following examples, we'll be using our triggers to add some serious low-end to some four-on-the-floor flavour dance grooves with a layered tambourine on the backbeat. The bass and snare parts stay the same through all five of the examples with the hi-hat part evolving through each one.

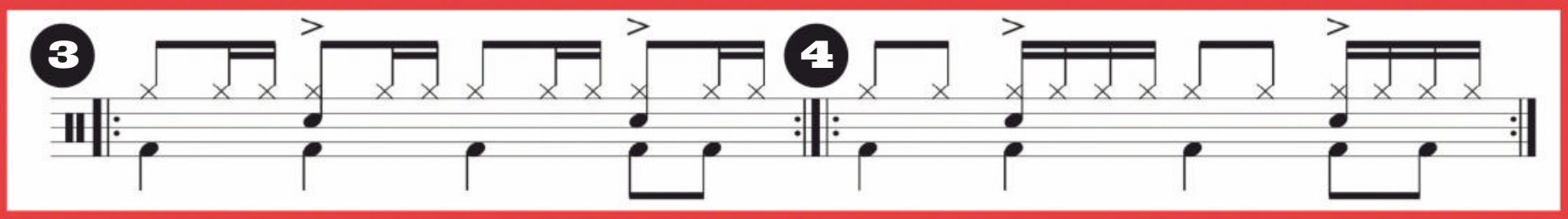
Watch Tom's lesson now at www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

Tech Talk

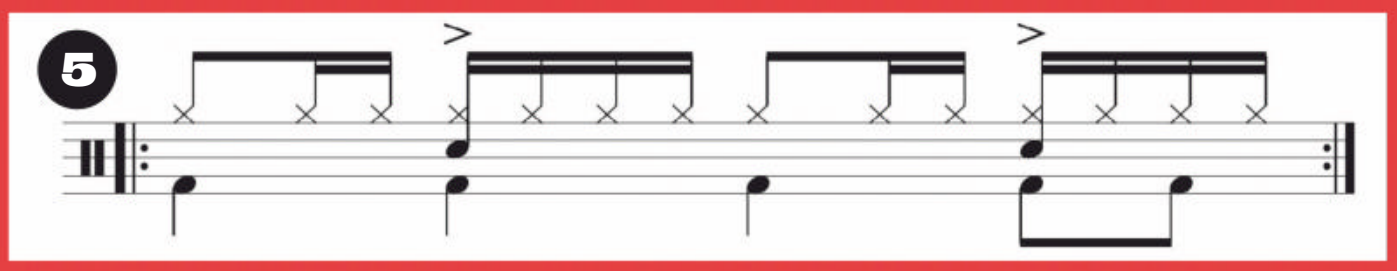
Splitter Cable
Also known as a Y-cable, the splitter separates the stereo signal into individual left and right channels (note the two lines on the stereo plug and single lines on each mono plug). Most modules can then be programmed to recognise each side as a separate trigger or pad.



These house-inspired grooves feature quarter note bass drums with the '& of 4' added. Starting with eighth-note hi-hats in Example 1, Example 2 introduces 16th notes on the 'a' of 2 & 4.



Adding in two more 16th notes gives us a full broken 16th flavour on the hats in Example 3. Number 4 alternates between eighth and 16th notes.



The final example brings back the broken 16th figure and combines it with the '2e&a' and '4e&a' of Example 4. It's worth experimenting with Examples 2-5 by playing the hi-hat parts with both hands.

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How to Develop a Portfolio Career

Few drummers can make a living out of just playing these days. Time to develop your 'side hustles' says **Mike Sturgis**...

Like many professional musicians, I started my journey in the industry by focusing exclusively on my abilities as a performer and then working out how to monetise these skills. And while performing and recording is a wonderful way to make a living, the reality is that this type of work is irregular and can, therefore, make it difficult to have a consistent and reliable income. To mitigate this risk, more and more musicians are forging their own version of a portfolio career that brings together multiple income streams. These activities may be directly related to their specialism or may see them branching off into unforeseen areas. And because musicians are creative people with a real passion for learning, it is the transferable skills that they acquire (almost under the radar) that can prepare them for opportunities within the industry that they may have never envisaged themselves doing.

The blending of roles will vary for each musician and may actually change across different periods of their careers. An extensive report commissioned by the UK Musicians' Union entitled *The Working Musician* (2012, p10) found that the skills musicians need to develop to sustain their portfolio careers are often beyond those associated with being a musician. These include skills in business, marketing, technology, teaching and community engagement. Above all, the ability to be adaptable is crucial to sustained success. With this in mind, let's have a closer look at a few great drummers who have embraced the portfolio career mentality and the different successful directions they have taken.

Be a geek about technology

The tools and methods for writing, recording and performing music have changed dramatically over the last 25 years. Digital audio workstations (DAWs) are often part of the process for all of them, and musicians have had to learn quickly to keep up with the speed of innovation. Andy Gangadeen (The Bays, Spice Girls, see p50) is well-known for his creative use of technology and has the following advice: "Regarding the question of skills other than drumming, I would say the more you have in your armoury the better your chances of employment. Definitely be fluent with either Ableton, Logic or ProTools. Understanding programming for either composition or playback purposes will open up so many more opportunities. Have a good understanding of recording/production and/or front-of-house engineering – don't be afraid to geek out on this stuff! There are endless possibilities in being creative other than holding a pair of sticks."

Richard Brook (ABC, Take That) is another advocate for learning about recording and has even set up his own studio: "I've got a young family, so I don't really like be away for extended periods anymore. This, of course, means I have had to find other ways to pay the bills. I got myself a studio space that I fitted out myself and started doing remote sessions. I had absolutely no idea about how to record drums, but I knew I wanted/had to do it. I learned recording techniques through watching YouTube tutorials, asking all of my colleagues and engineer friends for tips and techniques – a steep learning curve. I've now got regular clients from music library companies, producers, TV writers and songwriters."

Direct the music

The role of the musical director (MD) requires a broad skillset and is also one

Image: James Cumpsty

"...DON'T BE AFRAID **TO GEEK OUT ON THIS STUFF!** THERE ARE **ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES** IN BEING CREATIVE OTHER THAN HOLDING A PAIR OF STICKS."

ANDY GANGADEEN

Image: Rob Blackham

Image: Rob Blackham

"I FOUND MYSELF BECOMING...QUITE BY ACCIDENT, A MUSICAL DIRECTOR..."

RICHARD BROOK

that many drummers have a natural affinity with. Just like every band needs a solid drummer, the success of any performing act relies heavily on the MD. In addition to drumming for many top artists, Brook has been inexorably drawn to being an MD: "I found myself over the last 10 years becoming, quite by accident, a musical director putting together bands and overseeing many different artists' sets and shows. Suddenly I was sitting in front of spreadsheets doing budgets, liaising with artists, speaking to agents and managers, assigning parts to players, running production meetings, and talking to promoters. The drum parts are always the last thing I sort out before rehearsals! I never set out to learn all of this, I just wanted to be a drummer. These days I need to know how to engineer, record, organise projects properly, be a film editor, manage people, budget, network, teach, manage social media and most importantly – try to be creative. Oh, and try to practise the drums more!"

Go straight to video

The importance of video as part of a professional musician's self-promotion and income streams cannot be overstated. Skunk Anansie's powerhouse drummer Mark Richardson is someone who recognised this truth at an early stage and has since gone on to form his own video production company. His skills in this area not only facilitate the needs of the band but also provide him with other employment. "I consider myself very fortunate to still be playing for Skunk Anansie and earning the bulk of my income that way", says Mark. "Touch wood, the band will be around for a long time, but I also work really hard alongside the band to build up other incomes just in case. Regarding music videos, we rarely make a profit but corporate contracts with universities and businesses can be lucrative."

In addition to the band and his videography, Mark has branched out into several different areas including events management, personal coaching, session work, teaching and masterclasses. With regards to how all of this has evolved, he says: "I think it's important to state that before the democratisation of the music industry, I never once thought about working in any other area but video; I always wanted to direct and be creative with film. However, the advent of streaming and those in control of it are making it really tough for most musicians to earn a living."

Conclusion

As many musicians are discovering, there are a multitude of music-related options that you can potentially consider as 'side hustles' to your core skills. This could include being a teacher, composer, journalist, booking agent, sound engineer, tour manager, concert promoter or artist manager to name just a few. If you're willing to learn and are open to the opportunities that life may bring, it's quite likely that you will be able to add to your skillset and enjoy the process. As you do so, it may just turn out that you enjoy the variety and feel like your career is richer, both in terms of your personal satisfaction and your bank balance!

www.dime-online.org
www.mikesturgis.co.uk

The Working Musician. The Musicians' Union (2012).
Available from: www.musiciansunion.org.uk/Files/Reports/Industry/The-Working-Musician-report

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Rhythm

PLAY-ALONG TRACK

Classic Track

‘My Sharona’
The Knack

One of the sharpest drum hooks in history

DRUMMER: Bruce Gary

‘My Sharona’ was the first single released by LA rock band The Knack and as well as staying at the number one spot for six weeks it has gone on to become an all-time classic.

Its most identifiable feature has to be the unison guitar/drum pattern which drummer Bruce Gary orchestrates between the toms and a flammed snare backbeat, with the bass drum underpinning the toms. The key technical element in this pattern is the left-hand movement between the rack tom and snare, essentially on quarter notes. It’s this doubling up of the motion of the right hand between the floor tom and snare that generates not only the flammed backbeat but also the increased intensity of two toms being played on beats 1 and 3, as opposed to just one in the right hand.

Another key feature of the piece is the two-bar dotted quarter note over-the-barline figure which occurs at the end of each four-bar phrase of the chorus. This figure is orchestrated on the kit in various ways, from simple double-stop accents on the toms the first time through to more demanding ideas broken up between the ride cymbal, snare and crashes.

After the second chorus, we reach the guitar solo which is probably the most demanding section of the piece. It develops gradually, starting with 16th notes on the hi-hats, then transition into a regular 2 and 4 groove featuring quarter notes on the bell of the ride cymbal. As this builds in intensity it culminates with the bass drum playing eighth notes, Keith Moon style, before reaching the unison eighth note triplet figure orchestrated around the kit. And as if that’s not enough, there’s also a cymbal choke on beat 4 and a 2/4 bar to look out for before the final chorus during this fast-developing, deceptively challenging section.

The piece finally concludes with the drums punctuating the main lyric on the crash cymbals to end what is clearly a carefully constructed and beautifully executed classic drum track. And one which, if delivered with even half the conviction of Bruce Gary, will leave any drummer feeling like they’ve done quite a workout!

Image: Ebet Roberts /Getty Images

“ITS MOST IDENTIFIABLE FEATURE HAS TO BE **THE UNISON GUITAR/DRUM PATTERN** WHICH DRUMMER **BRUCE GARY ORCHESTRATES** BETWEEN THE TOMS AND A FLAMMED SNARE BACKBEAT...”

Watch Pete’s Play-Along now at
www.youtube.com/c/RhythmMagazine

1 The main tom groove features the left hand moving between the rack tom and snare to create the flammed backbeat on 2 and 4.

Drummer Bruce Gary said that he didn't particularly like the song at first and decided to give it a stuttering beat and incorporate a flam to create a fuller sound.

2 The dotted quarter-note figure in the chorus is orchestrated a variety of ways like being played on the toms or on the crashes with fills in between.

3 The guitar solo is the most challenging part of the piece as it features so many variations along with a unison triplet figure, a cymbal choke and a 2/4 bar.

‘Mr. Brightside’

The Killers

The first Killers’ song is a rock anthem that British crowds know all the words to...

PLAY-ALONG TRACK

DRUMMER: Ronnie Vannucci

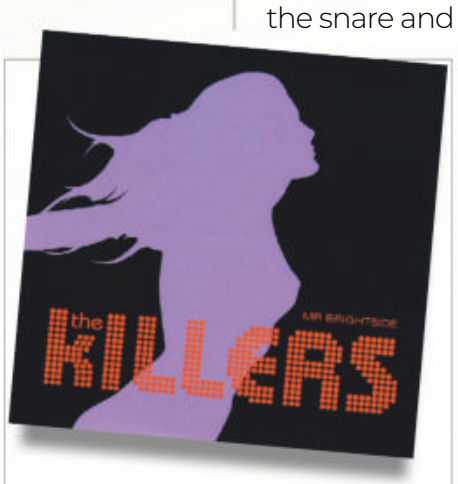
‘Mr. Brightside’ was the first single by The Killers to be taken from their album *Hot Fuss* in 2004. It was also the drumming world’s first introduction to the creative playing of Ronnie Vannucci. He’s a drummer who manages to infuse his performances with so much energy and personality, of which ‘Mr Brightside’ is a perfect example.

The track starts with its unique four-bar guitar intro after which Ronnie enters playing an uptempo 16th-note groove on the hi-hats. This first eight bars of drums are heavily effected with a crunchy overdriven sound but it’s the single-stroke 16th notes that are demanding from a playing perspective as they’re relatively fast. After a further eight bars the track settles into a more traditional eighth-note feel played on loose hi-hats before, after a further 12 bars, the right hand moves from the hi-hats to the floor tom for the four-bar pre-chorus pattern.

The chorus returns to the same hand-to-hand 16th-note feel on the hi-hats for sixteen bars before this same cycle is completed again. However, during the second verse, there’s a break to look out for on the first beat of bar seven.

Between the second and third chorus is a breakdown which again features the single-stroke 16th notes, this time played on the snare and gradually crescendoing up to the one-bar fill in bar eight. From here it’s choruses to the end, this time played on a crashy ride cymbal until the final three crashes.

Ronnie shows some of his influences here, like the Keith Moon-esque 16th-note fills and eighth notes played on the bass drum during the final bars. There are also echoes of Clem Burke in the new wave sound of the 16th-note grooves, while everything is executed with a power and flair worthy of John Bonham.



The Track

The Killers
‘Mr Brightside’

Image: Jim Dyson/Getty Images

“RONNIE SHOWS **SOME OF HIS INFLUENCES** HERE LIKE **THE KEITH MOON-ESQUE** 16TH-NOTE FILLS AND EIGHTH NOTES **PLAYED ON THE BASS DRUM** DURING THE FINAL BARS...”

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1 The first eight bars of the drums are treated with a crunchy distorted sound but it’s the hand-to-hand 16th notes that are really demanding to play.

Ronnie Vannucci's spirited drumming has helped make 'Mr Brightside' the longest charting song in UK history.

2 The verse features a more straightforward eighth-note feel played on loose hi-hats.

3 The eight bar breakdown between the second and third choruses features 16th notes playing a gradual crescendo on the snare.

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Six of the Best

Image: Anna Imm Photography

KARL BRAZIL

Big ballads, a dollop of rock, a dash of funk, and even some Christmas spirit from the session ace

Leona Lewis
Track: 'Run'
Album: *Spirit*

"I've only played on two tracks of hers, but I chose this because it was my first number one as a drummer. I knew what approach [producer Steve Robson] wanted, very much in the style of when I play with James Blunt, big ballad, keep it simple, keep it groovy. We did it three or four times just to get the performance because it's a very expressive song, so it's really important that the track builds dynamically."

Feeder
Track: 'Kyoto'
Album: *Tallulah*

"I really felt I hit the nail on the head with this one. Grant [Nicholas, Feeder frontman] likes to jam, so very often we just set up and play around with riffs together. It's an exciting process and it's always exhausting because we'll start at maybe 11am, then we'll go through to 10 at night and finish with a cheeky tipple of whiskey. I love a good riff, so I always try to work out parts that are syncopated with the guitar riffs."

Ed Sheeran
Track: 'How Would You Feel (Paean)'
Album: ÷

"I've been fortunate to record a fair bit with Ed. He's really clever with beats, he's got great rhythm with the way he sings, so he knows what he wants. He doesn't want anything over-complicated... I think it's important to listen to the vocals. Staying out of the way of the vocals, always thinking less. Less is more is a bit of a corny phrase but it's true. It's the simplest of tracks. I played this one with brushes, which is different for me."

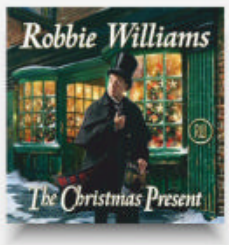
Jason Mraz
Track: 'Make It Mine'
Album: *We Sing. We Dance. We Steal Things.*

"Produced by Martin Terefe, I enjoyed this because I don't get many chances to play funk and I love it. It was done as a live record with everyone in the room at the same time. Which is rare these days. I was playing with a great band. You look round the room while everyone is waiting for the cymbals and the sustained notes to disappear and everyone is giving the thumbs up. It's magical to be in a situation like that."

James Blunt
Track: 'I'll Take Everything'
Album: *All The Lost Souls*

"James moulded me as a drummer, being a song player, simple but groovy and hopefully tasteful... My hero Jeff Porcaro, and John Robinson play stuff that makes you go, wow, that's perfect, couldn't have done it better. Producer Tom Rothrock worked on sounds with me, we experimented with tempos, and I felt like I was learning every day. That album was a big turning point for recording for me."

Robbie Williams
Track: 'Bad Sharon'
Album: *The Christmas Present*



"Produced by Guy Chambers and Richard Flack, it's quite Slade, it's very Birmingham. Don Powell would be very proud of me, it's a stomper. It's the first Christmas song I ever wrote with Robbie and I wrote it with a dear friend of mine called Ben Castle. I played it down with John Garrison, the bass player with James Blunt. We've got serious telepathy. John and I used to tour when I was 17, so we understand each other's groove."

musikmesse plaza

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